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ABSTRACT

To ascertain how one-parent families see their problems and how the community and government help them find solutions, interviews were held with 113 heads of one-parent families in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, and Vancouver, and 44 consultations were held with representatives of departments and organizations that serve one-parent families. Discussions are presented of the data obtained, under the following subject headings: The Parents; The Children; Some Special People; and Community Services for the One-Parent Family (Public Welfare, Training and Education, Housing, Family Courts and Legal Aid, Day Care of Children, Health Services, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Churches, Summer Camps, Counseling Services, Family Life Education, Homemaker Services, Some New Forms of Organization, and Organizations of Sole Parents). The 47 recommendations resulting from the study are listed under the following headings: Income: Employment and Social Assistance; Training and Education for Parents; Legal Procedures Affecting Children: Custody and Access; Family Court; Housing; Day Care; Homemaker Services; Big Brothers and Big Sisters Associations; Family Life Education; Holiday Services; Health; The Network of Services; Help to Newly Separated Parents; New Forms of Community Services; and Central Organization of Sole Parents. Appendixes provide: Statistical Data; Interview Guide for Heads of One-Parent Families; Interview Guide for Agencies; Memorandum to public health nurses, social workers, and others; Questionnaire for One-Parent organizations; and References. (DB)

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The One-Parent Family

report of an inquiry on one-parent
families in canada by the canadian
council on social development

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co-sponsored by
toronto single parents associated
parents without partners, hamilton chapter
the minus-ones, winnipeg
club helios, montreal
vancouver single parents association

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THE ONE-PARENT FAMILY

Report of an Inquiry on One-Parent Families in Canada
by The Canadian Council on Social Development

Co-sponsored by

Toronto Single Parents Associated; Parents Without Partners,
Hamilton Chapter; The Minus Ones, Winnipeg; Helios Club,
Montreal; Vancouver Single Parents Association

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The project, which includes both the Inquiry described in this report and the national consultation which is to follow (October 24-27, 1971), was financed through the Welfare Grants program of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

Co-sponsors of the project with the Council are the following one-parent organizations: Toronto Single Parents Associated; Parents Without Partners, Hamilton Chapter; the Minus Ones, of Winnipeg; Club Helios of Montreal; and the Vancouver Single Parents Association.

The Advisory Committee, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Grace Sherman, was composed entirely of sole parents. This group has provided invaluable assistance throughout the duration of the project. The Committee members are listed on page iii.

Mentioned in the Introduction are a number of public departments, social planning councils, social agencies and other groups without whose help the field work could not have been completed. The cooperation of these organizations in reaching the heads of one-parent families is warmly appreciated, particularly because we realize that what we were asking of them would take considerable time if prospective participants in the survey were to be given sufficient information on which to base their refusal or consent.

In particular, we are tremendously in the debt of the 113 men and women who agreed to sit down with our interviewers for an hour or two, or longer, in order to make their voluntary contribution to this project. We are very much aware that for many it was a painful experience to recall the grief and anguish of the past and to describe their troubles of the present. They accepted this responsibility because they wanted to do anything in their power to help the families who have experienced problems similar to their own. Many of them said this and expressed a keen interest in the outcome of the Inquiry.

Our appreciation also goes to the one-parent family groups that filled out a questionnaire providing information about their organizations.

Principal investigator for the Inquiry and author of this report is Miss Lillian Thomson. Dr. Marie Lanctôt interviewed French-speaking families and agencies. Mr. Michael Wheeler acted as research consultant for the design of the Inquiry. Mrs. Charlotte Unsworth served as coordinator of the project and secretary to the Advisory Committee. She also tabulated and analyzed the statistical data.

The recommendations contained in this report represent the views of the Advisory Committee and do not reflect an official position of the Canadian Council on Social Development.

Cenovia Addy
Project Director

The Canadian Council
on Social Development

October 1971

THE CANADIAN COUNCIL ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

ONE-PARENT FAMILY PROJECT

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below are based on the findings of the Inquiry and on the discussions of these findings in meetings of the Advisory Committee. The One-Parent Family Consultation, October 24-27, will examine and discuss the recommendations, identify priorities among them and explore ways of implementing them. The Consultation may wish to add further recommendations.

Income: Employment and Social Assistance

Problems caused by low income were prominent among the families participating in this Inquiry, partly because some of the participants were on social assistance programs, at inadequate rates, and some of the women were employed at low wage rates.

1. We recommend continuous study, planning and action, including experimentation, with the object of guaranteeing a minimum annual income to every Canadian family. We suggest that one-parent families headed by women compose one group which would be appropriate for the early implementation of an experimental program for a guaranteed income.
2. We recommend that wages for women be the same as for men, as is the case in the majority of provinces, and that the rates of minimum wages be adjusted realistically in relation to the cost of living.
3. We recommend that labour unions and professional associations take steps to ensure that women are afforded equal opportunities with men to earn an income based on ability, and to advance with men according to demonstrated capacities.
4. We recommend that rates of social assistance be under continuous review and readjustment in relation to the cost of living and nutrition standards.
5. We recommend that when a family is likely to be in receipt of social assistance over a long period of time, as is often the case in one-parent families with small children, the rate of social assistance should actually reflect the need for suitable clothing, for repairs to and replacement of household furnishings and equipment, and for social, cultural and recreation opportunities for all members of the family.
6. Because of the widespread feeling among recipients that they are uninformed about assistance regulations including information about their full entitlement to assistance and their rights to appeal, we endorse the practice of making such information available in printed form, but suggest that recipients should also be encouraged to discuss the regulations with department staff.

7. We recommend that persistent efforts be made to solve the problem of the stigma of "welfare" that is now experienced by many fatherless and motherless families.

8. It is recommended that some social assistance departments improve their application procedures by assigning sufficient staff to handle the flood of applications and by providing privacy for applicants, in line with the recommendations of the Federal Provincial Task Force on the Developmental Approach to Public Assistance.

9. It is recommended that social assistance departments liberalize their regulations, such as those pertaining to the amounts that recipients may earn without reduction of social benefits.

Training and Education for Parents

The inquiry offered substantial evidence that many people are making heroic efforts to maintain or regain independence through upgrading their training and education. Their efforts may be thwarted by the fact that training courses are not well related to job opportunities, or that, for women, being able to command a salary commensurate with the needs of the family may require a lengthy education.

10. We recommend full recognition of the fact that job training should lead to jobs that are actually available.

11. We suggest that a woman who is a sole parent should be free to choose between remaining at home on social assistance and joining the labour force, and that in either case she might need to upgrade her competence and to have access to community services to aid her in her role as a sole parent.

12. We suggest that post-secondary education, including university, be open to parents on social assistance as well as to others, wherever there are reasonably good prospects of eventual independence, without prejudice to their status as recipients of social assistance.

13. We recommend greater efforts to develop new or greatly extended career lines with substantial extensions of training programs in such vocations as child care, homemaker services, and aides to medical, teaching and social work personnel.

Legal Procedures Affecting Children: Custody and Access

In view of illustrations provided by sole parents, the Advisory Committee expressed reservations about the implications for children of certain legal procedures or practices or lack of them. For example, the Committee believes that custody of children may be assigned on a basis that is far too automatic.

14. It is recommended that in awarding custody, more attention be given to the welfare of the children and that appeal mechanisms be established whereby the rights of children may be protected more adequately.

15. We recommend that provincial child welfare departments assess the need for greater protection of children born to under-age single mothers (for example, under 16 years) and that relevant regulations in the Province of Saskatchewan be examined by other provinces.

16. We suggest the need for longitudinal research on the welfare of single mothers and their children whom they have retained in their own custody.

The Inquiry found many sole parents to be dissatisfied or even disturbed in situations in which the absent parent is given access to the children. We have concluded that the present approach is wrong, and that the emphasis should not be on the right of a contributing parent to see his or her child, but on the right of the child to have a good relationship with a parent.

17. We recommend that institutions such as family courts and all community organizations serving one-parent families, including sole-parent groups, recognize the significance of access to children, and that through counselling, group discussions, and other methods they endeavour to prepare separated parents for use of access in the best interests of the children.

18. We question the usefulness of the adversary concept in settling the issues of divorce and separation because we believe that this concept often works to the detriment of the children involved and can be demeaning to parents, and we recommend that the legal profession collaborate with other disciplines to develop new mechanisms which will better serve all of those concerned.

19. We also recommend that sole-parent organizations study the many issues involved in separation and divorce and that they exert pressure for changes where such changes are needed.

Family Court

We are concerned about the repeated comments of sole parents that family courts are overwhelmed by the pressure of the demands upon them, that there is failure apparently in many cases to obtain dependable financial settlements from the absent parent, that maintenance orders are infrequently enforced and that maintenance is not often commensurate with the needs of the children.

20. As a relatively immediate goal, we recommend that the collection of maintenance be made a function of the family court.

21. We support the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women that auxiliary services of family courts include an assessment branch dealing with the assessment and payment of alimony and maintenance.

22. As a long-term goal, we recommend re-examination of the purpose, scope, jurisdiction and staff requirements of family courts.

Housing

During this Inquiry, we saw families living in miserable dwellings in both city and country. For some of the large families, their need for suitable accommodation had been met by subsidized public housing. We found that smaller families everywhere and families in rural districts were conspicuously among those in the worst dwellings. The problems of finding and financing accommodation were compounded by prejudices against sole parents of either sex, against large families, and against racial minorities. We also found that the limited funds of public welfare departments are frequently expended on high rents for substandard accommodation for welfare recipients.

23. We recommend that organizations of sole parents become thoroughly acquainted with the basic facts about the housing problems of Canada, e.g., the small proportion of subsidized housing in the total housing stock of this country. The publications of the Canadian Council on Social Development on this subject are one source of information.

24. We urge that organizations of sole parents and other community groups continue pressure on all levels of government to provide low-cost housing in a volume that will more closely begin to match the evident need.

Day Care

Day care of children was identified by many parents as the most crucial community service needed by one-parent families. We found that parents greatly appreciate the opportunities for child development wherever these opportunities are now available through day care of children, but we also found widespread anxiety and restriction of the opportunities of both parents and children because of the limited provision of group day care, family day care, and lunch-hour, after-four and holiday supervision.

25. We endorse the principle of public responsibility in this field as stated in the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

26. We also endorse the Canadian Council on Social Development's statement in Social Policies for Canada, Part I, that a basic network of social services for all who need them would include day care of children, whether or not the mother is in the labour force.

27. We agree with the position taken by the Canadian Conference on Day Care (June 21-23, 1971, in Ottawa) that day care should be available, as a right, to all families and children in this country.

28. We recommend that sole-parent groups give high priority to developing programs of social action within their organizations to press for comprehensive day care services in their local communities which would be geared to meet the range of needs of one-parent families.

Homemaker Services

The heads of one-parent families expressed great appreciation of the homemaker service, even though limited, that has been available to a few of them. They told us, however, that as an area of community service, homemaker service is totally inadequate in scope and coverage; that it is hedged in by regulations, restrictions and limitations; seldom useful in emergencies; often unable to supply 24-hour service or long term service, and unavailable in large areas of Canada.

29. We endorse the principle that is stated in the Canadian Council on Social Development's Social Policies for Canada, Part I, and in the Council's Visiting Homemaker Services in Canada, that homemaker services must be part of the basic network of social welfare services for all who need them.

30. We call attention to the related section of the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women which found that the need for more homemaker services in Canada has been clearly demonstrated. As an immediate step, we urge that existing homemaker services be expanded to meet the needs of one-parent families, e.g., the provision of 24-hour service in instances where the sole parent is absent from the home due to hospitalization, etc.

31. We believe that because male sole parents are often in crucial need of homemaker service, members of this group of parents would have a special contribution to make to the boards and committees of homemaker organizations.

32. We also believe that sole-parent organizations should take an active role in pressing for the establishment or expansion of homemaker services to meet the needs of one-parent families.

Big Brothers and Big Sisters Associations

Many sole parents of older children believe that their children are helped or could be helped outside their own family by adults who are prepared to take an interest in them on a regular and long-term basis, thus partially compensating for the loss of a parent.

33. It is gratifying to learn of recent arrangements for public funds to be made available for Big Brothers services, because we recognize that existing services need to be expanded and that services need to be extended into more areas of the country. We recommend that there be more attention to the comparable needs of girls who only have one parent.

34. We urge Canadian men and women to consider contributing their time and energy in services to boys and girls in one-parent families, working through specialized agencies, such as Big Brothers, or through their churches, service clubs or other community groups.

35. We commend some of the organizations of sole parents for their successful efforts to raise money for this type of community service and we recommend that other organizations give consideration to similar efforts.

Family Life Education

Parents were strongly supportive of the recent development of high school courses on family life. Two areas in which parents expressed a need for extension of their own knowledge and competence were those on their legal rights as spouses and parents and on their responsibilities as parents in the sex education of their children.

36. It is recommended that the needs of sole parents be kept in mind by persons and groups who are planning family life education programs for parents.

Holiday Services

37. Because among the women who are sole parents there are many whose incomes are so low that car ownership or expenditures on travel or recreation are precluded, and because among those mothers there is a strong desire to have summer vacations away from the confines of home and crowded city neighbourhoods, we recommend that funding bodies such as united appeals and branches of the federal government give favourable consideration to the support of community organizations and groups that are competent to provide holiday services for mothers as well as children.

Health

Health services were observed in this Inquiry to be comparatively strong. However, in reviewing the comments made in different parts of Canada, it appeared that the subsidization of health care through social assistance programs varied from province to province and even from municipality to municipality.

38. It is hoped that steady progress will be made in the direction of more equitable distribution of resources for health care.

39. We further recommend that gaps and limitations be overcome where they now exist in dental services, family planning services and in mental health resources, especially for disturbed children and young people.

The Network of Services

We discovered that a few parents knew how to find their way through the network of services in cities, though many did not. Community services such as day care and homemaker services, while they are important to two-parent families, are often crucial to the one-parent family, and a gap at such a point in the network of services is more damaging to one-parent families.

40. We were impressed by the feeling of many parents that community services are organized with only the needs of two-parent families in mind (an illustration is provided by the hours of operation of some of these services) and we recommend that agencies do whatever is necessary to ensure the accessibility of their services to one-parent families.

41. We recommend that wherever possible information about existing services be available within neighbourhoods, and that residents of the neighbourhood be selected and trained to provide the information.

42. We recommend that through contacts with staff who are experienced in community development, and through discussion groups, people be encouraged and helped to identify their needs and the gaps in the existing network of services.

Help to Newly Separated Parents

We found much evidence that the period immediately following separation may be an extremely stressful one for many parents. Among those who participated in the Inquiry, many recalled feelings of bewilderment, grief, anxiety, loss of self-esteem and helplessness. The presence or absence of emotional support and practical advice and guidance was not infrequently mentioned as making a considerable difference in the individual's capacity to cope with the many demands associated with achieving

an early and satisfactory adaptation to the role of sole parent, including the ability to plan in the best interests of the children. The experiences of many parents led them to conclude that far too often existing services and institutions tend to want newly separated parents to involve themselves in an attempt to re-establish the marriage, rather than to assist them in adjusting to the reality of separation.

43. We recommend that community resources be mobilized to provide counselling and other services to newly separated parents which are appropriate to their needs.

44. We endorse the allocation of public funds to finance experimentation in this field -- such as the recent demonstration grant from the Department of National Health and Welfare to Parents Without Partners, Hamilton Chapter, to provide, in collaboration with the Family Service Agency of Hamilton, a range of services to parents newly separated from intact families.

New Forms of Community Services

45. We recognize and support the recent development of many new forms of community services offering people a variety of opportunities for self development, citizen participation and access to community services.

46. We stress the importance of continuous evaluation of these developments, with the aim of identifying factors that affect a project's success in the provision of opportunities for people, and of accumulating knowledge of useful objectives, structures and methods.

Central Organization of Sole Parents

The Inquiry did not clearly reveal interest, or lack of interest, in a national association of local groups of sole parents. There were expressions of need for a centre of information and for a consultative service that could be called upon, for instance, when a local organization of sole parents is being launched.

47. It is recommended that the One-Parent Family Consultation, October 24-27, discuss the desirability of creating a point of reference and information, central to all of Canada. And if there is evidence of a need and of interest, it is further recommended that there be discussion of the structure and program by which the need could be met, and auspices under which a program could be launched, the cost and possible sources of funding.

INTRODUCTION

An important group of families forms part of the total picture of family life in Canada. These are families with one parent instead of two. The general public has not grasped the fact that this group constitutes between 8 and 9 per cent of all families. It surprises even sole parents to be told that in 1966, out of 4½ million Canadian families there were over 372,000 with only one parent¹.

The one-parent family is not a new phenomenon. In the old days when life expectancy was shorter than it is today it was a common experience for a family to lose the father or mother or both. There were more orphans in those days. One-parent families were nothing exceptional. In fact it was to the advantage of a politician if, with some show of credibility, he could claim to have been raised by a poor but honest widow-woman. The affluent society has changed all that. One of the biggest problems of one-parent families today is that people expect them to be problems.

Undeniably, some of the one-parent families are facing exceptional stress. In homes without mothers, a father may be defeated in a search for the community resources that would make it possible for him to keep his children with him, properly cared for, over a long period of time. Others who are alone are often dependent on social assistance. If they are paid employees, they are likely to take home in the pay envelope about half as much as the normal income of two-parent homes. Both mothers at home and mothers in the labour force may be handicapped by a lack of community resources to aid them in carrying their family responsibilities. In almost

¹References are listed on page 165.

all of the families there is emotional stress in varying degrees and problems of human relationships that vary from family to family in complexity and intensity, although the same could be said of many, if not all, two-parent families.

These were the considerations that prompted the Canadian Council on Social Development to launch an Inquiry into the problems of men and women who are raising their families alone, with particular reference to the social policy implications of these problems. The specific objectives of the project were as follows:

1. To gather data on the incidence and characteristics of one-parent families.
2. To obtain a first-hand account of the experiences of one-parent families. Information will be sought about the problems they have encountered, their current needs and their goals and aspirations for themselves and their children. Their experiences in the use of community resources, in employment, in child rearing and other areas will be obtained. Their views about needed changes in social policy and its administration will be sought.
3. To secure opinions from such organizations as local social planning councils, direct service agencies, welfare departments, churches, recreation agencies and one-parent organizations regarding the needs and problems of one-parent families.
4. To identify one-parent organizations and examine their present and potential significance to the one-parent family, and, further, to explore the degree of interest among these groups in the formation of a national association and the possible functions of such an association.
5. To examine the social policy implications of the special problems of one-parent families and also of the increasing number of one-parent organizations.
6. To recommend measures geared to alleviate the problems of one-parent families and enhance their well being.
7. To set priorities for action and press for implementation of recommendations.

It was decided not to use the time and the funds of this project to compile bibliographies or reviews of relevant literature, because to do so would have been to duplicate the work that has recently been done by other persons and organizations^{2,3}.

Inherent in all aspects of the project is a basic principle: the importance of the views of those most concerned -- one-parent families. Opinions of lone parents were of immeasurable value in planning the project. Guidance was sought from one-parent families on the kinds of questions to be included in the interviews. The object of the whole exercise was to find out from the one-parent families themselves how they see their special problems and how they see the community and government helping them find solutions.

The Inquiry did not include any excursions into family history, or into the reasons for marriage breakdown or other previous personal problems. Some of the men and women who were interviewed appeared to welcome the opportunity to discuss such subjects but the Inquiry itself was designed to concentrate on how families are getting along here and now.

The communities in which interviews were undertaken were: Halifax and Dartmouth in Nova Scotia; Hull and environs in Quebec; London, Ontario; Grey County, Ontario; Winnipeg; Vancouver.

In preparation for interviewing the following documents were prepared:

1. Interview Guide for Use in In-depth Interviews with Heads of One-Parent Families. (Appendix 2).
2. Guide for Interviews with Agencies. (Appendix 3).
3. Memorandum to Public Health Nurses, Social Workers and Others. (Appendix 4).

The following organizations and departments agreed to suggest names of parents who might participate and to request their consent to be interviewed:

The Welfare Council, Halifax-Dartmouth
Children's Aid Society, Halifax-Dartmouth
Provincial Department of Public Welfare, Nova Scotia
Family Court, Halifax
Service social de l'Outaouais, Hull, Quebec
City Welfare Department, London, Ontario
Family and Childrens Services, London, Ontario
Children's Aid Society of Owen Sound and County of Grey, Ontario
Grey-Owen Sound Health Unit, Ontario
Day Nurseries Centre, Winnipeg
Department of Public Welfare, Winnipeg
Children's Aid Society, Winnipeg
Family Bureau of Winnipeg
City Social Service Department, Vancouver
Day Care Centre, Family Service Centres of Greater Vancouver.

In planning the project, it had been agreed that no attempt should be made to select a random sample of one-parent families. However it was decided that the total group to be interviewed should include:

1. The widowed, divorced, separated, deserted and unmarried;
2. Male and female parents;
3. Those who are currently receiving social assistance and those who are self supporting (the "working poor" and the middle income group);
4. Those who have become heads of one-parent families during the past year and those who have had a longer experience;
5. Those with preschool children, those with latency age children and those with adolescents;
6. Those who are members of one-parent organizations and those who are not;
7. Those living in a large metropolitan area, those living in a medium sized community and those living in a small town or rural area.

Besides the 95 contacts that were initiated by the above-mentioned voluntary organizations and public departments, other contacts were made with 18 parents whom we encountered at group meetings, or who heard of the project and volunteered, or who were encouraged to participate by friends, colleagues or fellow club members.

In addition to the interviews with 113 heads of one-parent families there were 44 consultations with representatives of departments and organizations that are serving one-parent families. There were eight meetings with organizations and groups.

The interviews on which this report is based took place in the spring and summer of 1971.

THE PARENTS

When a person becomes a sole parent, how does it feel? To some extent, it depends upon the circumstances of the moment. Was the change sudden and unexpected or something foreseen or even previously experienced?

In answering these and other questions we will try to let the men and women speak for themselves.

- After his wife left him and the children he felt very bitter and depressed. He badly needed a mature person to talk to frequently. He does not know where he would have turned for this kind of support had it not been for one of his brothers, unmarried, who at some sacrifice of his own interests came to live with them.

- For two years after her husband died she had a very hard time to adjust. She lost weight and worried a great deal for fear she would need to break up the home. The thought of being separated from the children was terribly distressing to her. Gradually she gained confidence with the help of her doctor and of the nurses and the welfare workers that she knew.

- This woman says that sex relations ended long before the separation came, and if she judges herself aright she is one of those who did not have any severe problems in making an adjustment in this respect. She is a person who has always needed some measure of solitude. She made a practical point, however, that one of the adjustments to be made is simply to being alone in a house. There are many women who have definite apprehensions on this score.

- This young man had had several years of extremely happy married life. He is quite sure that he and his wife were looked upon by all of their friends as an ideal couple. During one of his absences on business his wife left, taking the children, with the intention of establishing a permanent relationship with another man. He thought he had lost his children as well as his wife. He says that it was an extremely severe shock and he was not himself for weeks. He could scarcely face the empty hours at home. His work suffered. One of the men in his firm helped him by going out with him after working hours or taking him home for dinner and an evening of companionship. He thought things through and eventually he regained custody of his children.

- Here is a widow who says that the greatest adjustment she had to make was having to handle everything herself. "A woman has to really grow up". She says that she was always rather independent but now feels that she has to be desperately independent. She is doubtful about the wisdom of taking too many favours even from kindly people because she doesn't want to allow herself to become dependent.

There were others who seem to have had a poor start in life and to have been pursued by misfortune. As mentioned earlier, interviewers avoided probing into the past, but nevertheless 28 persons (nearly a quarter of the total) volunteered the information that their early homes had been unhappy and 10 of the 28 said that they had come from badly broken homes. Here is what some of this group said about their experience of marriage.

- Her marriage was unhappy right from the beginning. Her husband was a heavy drinker and got into trouble with the police. He is now serving a sentence. She says that she never has enjoyed that kind of security which you experience when you live with a person whom you trust entirely and who will stand behind you come what may. She deserted her home several times, usually with the youngest child. The social services would find out about her absence through her husband and since they did not want to place her children they would insist that she return home. The children have been distressed because of these ups and downs.

- Another person is a girl still in her 20's. When she was 15 she became pregnant. Her parents were very anxious for her to complete her grade eight, which she did. They wanted to have the baby adopted but she wanted to marry. During that summer she completed elementary school, got married and had her first child. At present she seems more absorbed in her own emotional problems than in her children. Perhaps she missed so much of her own youth that she has not matured to the point at which she could welcome the responsibilities of motherhood. She may be an example of a young woman who feels cheated out of all the normal carefree life that one expects in the later teens.

- In another family the husband has deserted several times. Nevertheless, the mother says that her main problem has been, and still is, after four years, the continuous anguish of waiting for her husband's return. She lives with that expectation and all the events in her life are interpreted in light of it. For instance, her home is in a rundown district and it might be advisable to move to more pleasant surroundings. But she wants to remain there because the house belonged to her father and is her birth place and should her husband return, she wants him to find her where he left her.

- One of the men had been married twice and commented on the contrasting experiences in these two marriages. His first marriage ended with the death of his wife, the second in divorce. He feels sure that a marriage breakdown, such as a divorce, is a much worse experience than the loss of a spouse by death. He would not have believed this beforehand. He says he loved his first wife who was a competent homemaker and an affectionate mother. They had a very happy home life. During her short terminal illness they were very close and talked over plans for the children on the understanding that he would endeavour to keep the children with him. He thinks that this good experience in his first marriage made him unaware of the risks of getting into an unhappy marriage and into all the disappointed hopes and legal trouble of marriage breakdown.

One or more of the people interviewed speculated about what has gone wrong with society to cause so many failures in marriage. For example, one young woman wondered about the generation of parents of her own parents' age. She feels that there was something seriously the matter with the parents who came back from the war or out of the depression. She thinks that the children of that generation of parents, herself being one, were brought up to fit into a mold and were not supposed to be individuals. There was too much stress on togetherness.

However, not all of the men and women painted a dark picture. Many of them said that they are definitely better off now than before they became sole parents, and from the particulars they gave and their manner of speaking we had no reason to doubt their assessment.

- This young woman, divorced, employed and with one child, stated that she must frankly say that she enjoys living alone. She does not say that she will never marry again but she does not feel ready to take any leap into the unknown. L

- Another woman said she and her ex-husband are friendly. She says that as far as she is concerned she would not marry again. She is used to living as a single person and prefers it. Her marriage deteriorated steadily for five years and she might as well have been separated all those years. She was pregnant when the final separation occurred. The marriage had not got off to a good start because they lived with the paternal parents and had no life of their own.

- A woman whose marriage lasted several years said that in the early days of separation she used to wake up in the mornings and thank God that her marriage was over. It was a frightful marriage. Moreover, she did not talk to anyone and no one realized how bad the conditions were until the break came. She says that she never liked to hear people talking about the difficulties with their husbands and therefore she refrained from talking about hers.

- This young woman says that she is happy as a sole parent. A husband doesn't mean much in terms of being there or giving emotional support for a child. In the life of a child it is always the mother who is typed as "the bad guy". The whole domestic scene is dropped on the shoulder of the family woman. "There is no darn reason why a man can't get his own darn supper". Even if the little one needed a meal, a change of clothing, or to be put to bed, the man of the family wouldn't lift a finger to look after her because that's the woman trip. Most of the tension between herself and her present husband is because he rejects the child whenever he rejects her. He "closes himself off". However, relationships can't always be open. To gain a little privacy at night she herself must be cold and unfriendly. It is no partnership and, she added, this is what Women's Lib is all about.

- Here is another type of the previous experience. Sole parenthood began for this woman with the sudden death of her husband and two of the children. However, she had had some unusually bad experiences before that. A native of West Germany, she and other members of her family were literally starving at the end of the war, with all of the physical symptoms of starvation. Then they began to get back on their feet and subsequently completed their arrangements for migration to Canada. This experience has given her a conviction that she could adjust to anything that life could throw at her. At present she is too busy to worry much about her circumstances or the future. "If you want to be lonesome you can be". She has relatives and friends and wide cultural interests, as well as a demanding occupation.

In the above comments, the parents obviously revealed their wide differences in experience, in the value that they seem to place upon themselves, in their adjustments and adaptations, in expectations and happiness. Therefore, in this report, we want to emphasize the diversity that is to be found among one-parent families. We want to challenge the common tendency of the general public to consign one-parent families to a single compartment and to forever label the compartment "broken homes".

Social and Recreational Life

With regard to the social relationship of sole parents, most writers on the subject frequently identify loneliness as the major problem, or at least one of the worst problems. On the basis of what the people told the interviewers, we can only say that for some, but not for others, sheer loneliness is an ever present and serious problem, as the following descriptions of women alone will indicate:

- She is very lonely, especially at night when the children go to bed. There is nothing to do except watch TV and read, and this often amounts to boredom. "Then you start thinking of all you could do if you didn't have the kids, but then you go to cover them up or something and you think it's not so bad to have them with you".

- This woman is in later middle age with only one child left at home. She feels lonely more than she did when all the children were around. She doesn't belong to any group and she says that this is because of her poverty and her lack of transportation.

- One young woman said that she was not a very social person. But at the end of the interview, she had some suggestions about making contacts with other girls situated as she is (alone with children) and her suggestions revealed her loneliness. It would be nice if someone else with a child would come for supper. It would be nice if she and other young women could get together for coffee or just to watch a TV program or if she could say to somebody "come over to my house" or if there were someone to call or visit. It would also be nice if there were mothers who would pool responsibilities for babysitting in a neighbourly plan. That was the way it was in the place from which she came.

Anything that can be observed about one-parent families, or indeed about any families, must be observed in the context of society as a whole. While not underestimating the misery of loneliness for the sole parent, it must be admitted that among the well known characteristics of contemporary society are the loneliness of people in the crowded cities, youth's despairing search for significant personal relationships, and the disarray and unhappiness of so many lives and communities. For example, in The Greening of America

the author speaks of white collar and blue collar workers who have become convinced that they are of little value. "Caring nothing about their work, nothing about what happens to them, they face a prospect stretching all the way to retirement, another form of death, but death is with them already, in their sullen boredom, their unchanging routines, their minds closed to new ideas and new feelings, their bodies slumped in front of television to watch the ball game on Sundays."

Of course at times it becomes a question of what one means by "loneliness". Can the following be regarded as descriptions of loneliness, or of aloneness?

- A woman who in the main has a happy life said that the loneliness of life as a sole parent was in evidence mostly because there was no one with whom she could discuss important decisions in the family.

- A man who also is in reasonably happy circumstances thinks that the sole parent has a little nagging feeling that he may not be handling things right. He is very conscious of his sole responsibility. There are lots of people he could ask for advice, and he does so, but still it is not quite the same as having a partner in the home with whom questions of child guidance, for example, can be talked over.

One thing seems clear. People talked not so much about loneliness as about something that might be called a feeling of social discontinuity or of social displacement. This feeling appeared to be very common and very uncomfortable. Here are a few of many illustrations:

- A professional woman said that she finds the social aspects of her life very difficult. She is involved in many activities, some connected with her work and some with her church and yet there is this feeling of isolation. It is difficult to find women of her own age with whom she could enjoy an evening's outing. Her work is among women and she would like more male companionship. She said that a desire for sex relations is no part of her problem because during her married life she began to find sex relations repulsive. After separation she experienced a sort of restlessness until she decided she must get hold of herself, especially for the

sake of the children. Since then, on the few occasions on which she has had a date, the evenings invariably ended with an invitation for the night and this repelled her. It is companionship she wants and an escort when she has an opportunity to go to mixed groups.

- A young housewife said that when she and her husband were living together they went out a great deal, and she misses the recreation, especially on weekends. Friday nights are very difficult and so are Sunday afternoons. She doesn't mind Saturday night so much because she is always busy getting the children ready for Sunday school and the time is fully occupied. She has made no friends since her separation. Her women friends are all with their husbands.

- This woman, a mother of several children, finds that the village in which she lives is an extremely cliquish place. When her husband was alive they went out together about once a week with couples and she misses this social life. She has a feeling of being an extra now and she says that if you want to go to the hotel with another young woman people think it queer. Sometimes she goes to a dance with a girlfriend and her husband. There are no women's organizations to join.

- A young woman with a couple of children says her social life has been radically changed. She says that she and her husband seldom went out to large parties and functions of any kind but they visited other couples and entertained other couples. After separation, this kind of socializing ceased entirely. She noticed that women friends would invite her by saying: "John is going fishing so come over". You are an odd party. Most of her friends are now single and in their late 20's. She envies them because they can have holidays away from their ordinary places of work and living and also because if they wish they can invite a man to stay overnight.

- A young businesswoman finds that some people become embarrassed when they discover she is divorced. This in turn embarrasses her, out of a sort of sympathy for them and perhaps out of some uneasiness about her own status.

- One businesswoman says she often wishes that she were still living in the United States. When she was there she knew many people who were divorced, and nobody thought anything of it. Here, in this very conservative community, one feels like a social misfit. People are suspicious. She has a theory that this is because a divorced person represents something that could happen to them and the feeling is disagreeable to them.

A few men and women considered that their social life had not changed for the worst after their marriages terminated. In the families of professional and business people, social activities tended to be connected with their work.

One person said that she had found her friends very helpful, especially some of the women in the same apartment block who had been through the experience of separation and who gave her moral support. In those days she was wondering if her husband would return and this expectation continued to preoccupy her for several months. One of the men said that his social life was much more satisfactory than before. Most of the couple's friends had been his wife's, and there had been a great deal of pressure to go out or to entertain. Now he does not have nearly so much social activity and this suits him. He has a small group of friends who are about half-and-half couples and separated people. He is having a reasonably happy and interesting social life.

Some people interviewed felt that there was prejudice and discrimination against one-parent families. Others did not. The picture of discrimination is confused by prejudice against "welfare people", the objections of landlords to large families as tenants, the inquisitiveness and suspiciousness of neighbours about the morals of separated men and women, and finally by unadulterated race prejudice. Some families are the focus of all these prejudices.

- A young woman with five children has experienced a good deal of discrimination. When her husband moved out her landlady began to pick on her -- a change in attitude that was rapid and marked. When she inquired about other places to live, she found that even where there was a sign saying "children welcome" she was quickly told that five children were not welcome. How much her colour played into this discrimination is a question that she did not discuss.

- A woman with several children feels that the rural community in which she lives is extremely prejudiced against a woman living apart from her husband. Nevertheless, gossip concerning

one' morals can be avoided. For instance, her pastor never comes to see the family without bringing someone with him. A woman who is living alone must learn to stand on her own feet. It took her about a year to realize that this is so.

- Another woman who separated some time ago feels that she is looked down upon, particularly after her pregnancy became known. In this small rural community people gossip more, she said. They report it if she even walks down the road. They know every move she makes. Their children tease her children about not having a father.

There are those who are not conscious of any discrimination. Most of the men said that they had not been exposed to prejudice but they believed that women were more likely to suffer from it. Some of the men and women said they were lucky to be working among people who readily accepted their status. Some felt that, if anything, employers and colleagues gave them a little preference or leeway just because they were alone with their children.

Today's lack of community consensus about standards of sexual relationships came out clearly. There were wide variations in what people said about their lifestyles in this respect.

- In discussing her social life, one young woman said that she was always conscious of the need to maintain strict moral standards. This has been one of her principal aims. Her social life has been changed to a certain extent because she doesn't bother going out. Her friends are still the couples she knew when she and her husband were together. These are good friends who stood by her in her trouble. She says "if one is living properly one feels it is not important what the neighbours say".

- On the other hand, another person considers it nonsense for separated persons to claim that they have no access to sex activity. She knows that there is a great deal of promiscuity among unattached people, although she says that she herself needs to be emotionally involved in order to enter into a sexual relationship. She believes that some of the women form sexual relationships simply for comfort, especially if they have been deserted. They form these relationships in order to recreate a sense of being desired and desirable.

- For one person recently widowed, sex life during marriage was completely satisfying. With the problems arising out of the cessation of sex relationships her doctor has helped with medication and wise counsel. She attributes her reasonably good gradual adjustment to this sensible assistance.

- In a very different social environment another young woman has adopted a code that is certain to be unacceptable to the majority of her fellow citizens. Without legal marriage she has a relationship that pleases her with a male friend of a different race. She seems happy as a mother and the children appear to be happy. Her healthy ego and warm relationships with people may offset the disadvantages of living in a rough world of tension and potential violence. In this sense, the family lifestyle may constitute a good adaptation.

Some of the parents, in spite of heavy home responsibilities, are making efforts to involve themselves in community recreation or services. Most of them recognize the importance of outside relationships and activities. One person commented that it is better for sole parents to stay in the community in which they started and where their friends and relatives live. There may be a tendency to escape from the scenes of their troubles but this she thinks is a mistake, however natural it may be. Another said there is a serious need for any sole parent to socialize and not to become too wrapped up in the family, which could result in resentment of the children or in losing contact with what is happening in the world outside. It is good to have a hobby and hers is painting. One should try to get away from self-pity and a hobby or volunteer work with people less fortunate than oneself is always a good experience. However, finances are the great problem as far as her social life is concerned. Everything has to be weighed and balanced. For instance, do you buy a tricycle for the little boy or, alternatively, pay for a babysitter so that you can have some recreation yourself?

Another woman of mature judgment has been having a good experience in a group of young women who are all on a provincial assistance program. She believes there should be more groups for women with small children. "Kids can get on your

nerves terribly". There is one girl in her group who has come alive since she joined. She has reduced her weight, purchased a wig, talks better and is enjoying life again. Previously she would sit in the beer parlour, not to drink much beer, which she could not afford, but to tape the music which she would then take home and play back. This club wants to get the names and addresses of women who are just entering the provincial assistance program in order to offer the companionship of the group. Among these women she believes the basic problems are loneliness, bewilderment and lack of knowhow to cope with practical problems.

Another girl says she has no recreation because she can't afford it. Her doctor tells her that she needs to get out and meet people but this would run her into the expense of a babysitter. She is, however, on the executive of the Parent-Teacher Association. She did not speak as if she enjoys this very much. She is not very well acquainted in her city. She finds the evenings difficult. Evidently the women in the neighbourhood had tried keeping each other's children but the children don't settle down in the evening. The system works better in the daytime.

More than one woman strongly recommended the Alanon Program in which at least two of them had held executive positions. They emphasized that this is not a program for the reform of an alcoholic husband but a self-correction program for improvement of a wife of an alcoholic. It helps get rid of feelings of inferiority and self-pity. Another said that she attempted to solve her problem of loneliness by getting involved in various outside activities such as sports, and also by acting as a guide and supervisor to school children for visits to museums and other cultural activities. One young woman with four children is doing a lot of voluntary work in the neighbourhood. She and others

started a campaign at the rink in order to raise money for a hockey banquet for the boys who play in the junior teams. She is recording secretary for the district Cubs, and gives voluntary time at the school library.

When one woman first became known to a public welfare department, she had a painfully poor self-image. The social worker planned that she visit people in the community as a volunteer. The selection proved to be a happy one for she became a helpful visitor, sometimes with people who, by reason of illness, were in great need of her companionship.

A woman who is on a provincial assistance program has given extensive leadership in her district and on metropolitan boards and committees. She therefore represents a growing number of men and women who are working hard to secure a better life for people below or near the poverty level, especially in the deteriorated areas of the large cities.

What seems to be wanted most is recreation within reach of people in their own neighbourhoods, with babysitting included. More mixed groups of men and women are needed. Holiday facilities within the reach and means of one-parent families would fill a great need. One young single mother who is employed and raising a child said that what she most often longed for was a summer camp to which she could go for weekends or vacations with her child. Another separated young housewife with three children said that, more than anything else in the world, she would like to have a two-week summer vacation. But this seemed to her to be an utterly unrealizable dream.

How Relatives Help or Hinder

In the main, the immediate relatives of one-parent families were reported to be a help and support. Some of the older generation might have been heartbroken about a divorce or shocked by pregnancy without marriage, but usually this did

not mean the breaking of family ties. For the poorest people, the lack of cars meant less personal contact among family members than most families enjoy. The few attempts to live with parents and grandparents never worked out well. Not many relatives were said to contribute financially to less well off relatives, except to help with children's clothing. Nevertheless there were frequent references to parents, sisters, and brothers in such terms as "I don't know what I would have done without them" or "I didn't know how to appreciate my family until things went wrong".

When a father is out of the picture, men relatives are sometimes close to the boys in the family, taking them out and in general playing a father's part to some extent. For example:

- Her relatives cannot give any material help but they are a close-knit family and have given her a great deal of affectional warmth and support. Thursday of this week is father and son night at the Cubs and her brother is taking her son. Other relatives live in another city but she and the children usually see them during the summer.

Parents-in-law were often referred to with warm appreciation. Marriages may crash, but grandparents are usually devoted to grandchildren and as often as not pay their way for summer visits.

A few people had had such wretched childhood experiences that nothing could mend their family relationships.

- The father of this family had an extremely poor home life. His mother had had three divorces. He was in foster homes and in institutions as a child. He recalled standing watching other children playing, himself usually behind a fence somewhere. His mother has never mellowed. She has continued to write hateful letters to him. He married at 18 years.

In these and other situations, bad feelings existed for years, unconnected with the marriage or its failure. One young woman said that she would like to move in order to get farther away from her domineering mother. Another spoke of her father with hearty dislike. Someone else said that she wanted nothing but to stand clear of all her family connections.

In some situations relatives disapproved of the marriage in the first place and their worst suspicions were confirmed by the marriage breakdown. This attitude of "I told you so" is not conducive to warm family feeling.

In some instances the mothers of separated wives would be more helpful and more welcome if they would stop criticizing the husband and father, especially in the hearing of the children.

Parents in one family, meaning well no doubt, were determined that their daughter should divorce her husband. They badgered her until, with a great deal of difficulty and the help of others, the daughter convinced them that she loved her husband and did not mean to sue for a divorce.

It appears that close-knit, extended families can be a tremendous help to one-parent families, and the absence of such encompassing support is a further disadvantage to the sole parent and children.

Attitude to the Ex-Spouse

With regard to the attitudes and relationships of the sole parents to their spouses or former spouses, possibly most people would expect to find great bitterness in many instances. Certainly there was some of this:

- As for contact with her husband, she does not wish to see him again, ever. Even if he dies she wouldn't show up. When asked if her children were in contact with the father, she said she didn't think so but it might be possible that the older married children were in touch. She said that her children never liked their father, as most of the time they saw him in his state of drunkenness and all that goes with it.

- She does not want to talk about her husband. She said that she had no connection with him. There may be a divorce -- she doesn't know. What she would like more than anything else is to have her name changed back to her maiden name. She plans to see if she can get help with this through a lawyer.

In some instances, fear more than dislike or bitterness is dominant:

- This separated young woman with a small child is thankful that she has overcome her dread of her husband's reappearance. When she first came to live with her parents she could not sleep until daybreak because of this fear.

- Another person, separated, with one child, is frightened of what might happen. She has an unlisted phone number and at work she will not answer a telephone call directly but will call back. There was great instability and considerable violence in the man she married. She is constantly afraid that he will launch attempts to change the custody agreement.

In several situations, there was no clear evidence of remaining bitterness, fear, or dislike, but something more like contentment.

- This separated man probably would not claim to have any unusual powers of description but he did convey a vivid impression of the emptiness of the lives of women in the community in which they lived. These women had far too little to do at home. They were apt to be scornful of women's organizations. They formed vicious circles held together by petty jealousies, sometimes because of vulgar little love affairs. His wife had a moody and uneven disposition and her departure from the family apparently did not come as any great surprise, and yet it was a bitter experience.

Parents whose partners are in prison -- there were five of them in the Inquiry -- described their peculiar problems and all but one of them hoped for the termination of the marriage.

- She had always thought that the marriage had been so unsatisfactory from the beginning that nothing more could hurt her, and yet when he was sent to prison it was a blow and she is still shaken. He was sentenced the day the youngest child was born. She had mixed feelings as to what to do with the rest of her life. She wants to find out what her rights are with respect to the children. She has had to be both mother and father so long that she considers the children are hers and she is the one who must plan for them. She may apply for a divorce. Her husband says that he is receiving psychiatric treatment and that he is a changed man. However, after years of marriage that never brought any pleasure or security she is very doubtful.

There were also examples of friendly and cooperative relationships between ex-spouses, as this one example shows:

- Nancy's* ex-husband is in the city, with a good job, and he maintains a close relationship with her and the children as well as contributing to the support of the household. He sometimes babysits when Nancy has a date. He usually has the children with him on weekends. For Nancy, this weekend arrangement has advantages and disadvantages. She feels she needs a break from the busy working week. She says it may sound like a simple thing, but it is a real joy to be able to sleep late on Sunday morning. On Monday, of course, the children are out of hand. The foster day care mother notices this, too. But on the whole it is a good plan and the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. It sounds as though Nancy and her ex-husband get along fine so long as they don't have to live together.

Questions of reconciliation seemed to be deeply perplexing to a few of the parents. It is here that skillful professional counselling may be urgently needed. There are people who, although separated and even divorced, still cling to a hope of reconciliation. As one person said, some people get a legal divorce but never divorce themselves emotionally. For those who are only separated and not divorced the question of reconciliation may be very real. One mother seemed to be manipulating the situation with the aim of reconciliation, in spite of clear indications that a reunion would be hurtful to the children. Others were in a state of painful indecision.

- Stephanie saw her husband recently, briefly and by chance. He said that he had some feeling for her but he didn't know quite how to describe it. She herself would very much like a reconciliation but she is doubtful whether he would consent. All of her relatives think she is extremely foolish to consider it. They think that she should try for a divorce as soon as possible. She feels puzzled, because she has never had any explanation of her husband's action. He went out one day and never returned to her. She thinks that they badly need counsel from an objective person but she lives in the country with no such service within easy reach.

- Another young woman found the adjustment to separation extremely hard and she says that only her religious faith helped her through. Actually she has not really come through. The separation came about because of her husband's attachment to another woman. She and her

*When names are used for convenience in this report, they are fictitious.

husband write to each other and this is one of the complications. He raises the question of reconciliation from time to time. In the interview she tried to express the frustration and uncertainty that she feels because of her husband's apparent ambivalence. His letters hint at reconciliation and yet he seems incapable of making a clear-cut decision. She appears to be basically a rather shy and conventional person with no pattern of marriage breakdown in her family. The whole experience, past and present, is deeply distressing to her.

Among the families who are within easy reach of responsible counselling services, several of the women said that their husbands refused to avail themselves of these services. Is it a feature of our culture that men are not supposed to need help with personal problems? Here was one reconciliation that didn't work:

- The couple tried reconciliation and a family service agency offered marriage counselling. The husband would not go to the sessions. They were together for about a month. The time was a particularly difficult one for the children, who had been on their own and were getting used to their mother's ways. The household was organized with the children's help. During the weeks that their father was back at home there were difficulties when he attempted discipline and also there were disputes, as of old, about the TV programs, because when he concentrated on a sports program he didn't want anybody talking. The initiative for the final separation came from her, when she asked him to go. She says that she tried the reconciliation for the sake of the children and her counsellor says that this was not a sufficient reason.

Thoughts of Marrying Again?

Many of the sole parents had no exclusive friendships with members of the opposite sex. Among the women, there was an oft-repeated statement that social engagements with men were almost impossible because most men regarded a separated woman as an easy target and wanted to stay overnight if not to move in. Others had tried exclusive friendships that included sex relationships only to discover, or so they thought, that the history of their broken marriage was repeating itself. These persons usually said that they didn't want to get hurt again. There were women involved in relationships that looked like

adolescent love affairs. They were bewitched by the good looks of both the young men and their cars and they bubbled over with talk of nothing else. A few of them had had a series of such romances and they liked to add up the total number.

Many of the parents spoke thoughtfully of their children's reactions to their special friends. They spoke as if these reactions mattered to them. Sometimes the children loved the parent's friend. Sometimes there was jealousy on the part of small children or hostility on the part of older boys and girls. One man reported ruefully that he had a number of girlfriends and his older children were always asking why he couldn't marry one of them. Unfortunately, they preferred one that he didn't care for very much. He thinks someday he will get a divorce and marry again.

Some had definite plans for remarriage in the future. Typically, these persons had been freed from previous unions by the change in the divorce legislation in 1968 and in all cases they seemed to be looking forward to the new marriage with happiness and confidence.

Several said that they had made no plans but they would like to marry again. Their reasons were varied. A widow said that she would know now what she wants in a companion and she has been seeing a good deal of an old friend and finding pleasure in this association. Another widow said that she would like to marry in order to get off the Mother's Allowance and she added that anyone who wanted to marry her would have to understand that she would require a great many costly drugs because her health is poor. A business girl said that she doesn't want to work for the rest of her life and, therefore, she would like to marry again. One young woman was anxious to marry for financial security

and also because "the children need a man around". She says that sex relations are not the most important thing. During her marriage, finances made more difference than sex relations. Her husband wanted to save and objected to credit buying. She would marry again if she got the chance, for financial security and for companionship, but it would have to be someone who could cope with her disturbed boy. One of the men said that his wife is still searching for relationships and has not found one that satisfies her. As far as he is concerned it does not matter to him whether he obtains a divorce or not. It might matter some day, however, and he is saving to pay for a divorce.

Others were doubtful about remarriage. One girl said that she does not feel ready for a second marriage. She would not want to expose the children to a step-father, and she does not want to marry again before she is sure about the future of her boys. Anyway, she is doubtful about marriage for her. She likes homemaking but she would hate to go back to a state of financial dependency on a person who gives support unwillingly. Another said that she is not thinking about the future very much. She does not say that she will never marry again but she feels that she is not in the right mood with regard to men. She knows that she is on the defensive and is inclined to be resentful. At the same time, she is not unhappy. She is a great deal happier than she was before the separation or than she would be if there were a reconciliation. Some people tell her that there is sure to be a reconciliation. She would never consider it.

Some were definitely negative. One young woman with a child said that she liked being a sole parent, or at least would like it if she had fewer money worries. She is not interested in another marriage. She says that all of the men she knows, or is likely to be able to know, are not good prospects as husbands and fathers. They are the kind that would leave all of the work, the

cooking and the child care -- everything -- to their wives. She would not mind thinking of another marriage if she could find anybody who would appreciate what she does in the home, but she is doubtful that this is possible.

A sizeable number said that they were involved in or would welcome another union, but they didn't want another legal marriage. To illustrate:

- She seems to have doubts about the whole concept of marriage in our society, and is inclined to think that it would be better for a couple to live together until they know each other well and know that they can be secure with each other before getting into a legal marriage.

- Another, a mother of four small children, said that she would like to marry again for the sake of the children only. Otherwise she would not. Even if she were marrying for this reason she would definitely want to live with a man first in order to find out before getting into a legal marriage what sort of person he really is with his wife and children. She is convinced now after her bad experience that marriage should be safeguarded by this kind of trial union.

These ideas are reflections of passages in Toffler's book, Future Shock.⁵

In a chapter entitled "The Fractured Family", Toffler says, "As conventional marriage proves itself less and less capable of delivering on its promise of lifelong love, therefore, we can anticipate open public acceptance of temporary marriages. Instead of wedding "until death us do part", couples will enter into matrimony knowing from the first that their relationship is likely to be short-lived. They will know, too, that when the paths of husband and wife diverge, when there is too great discrepancy in developmental stages, they may call it quits -- without shock or embarrassment, perhaps even without some of the pain that goes with divorce today."

Parents were in favour of prevention -- of anything that would prevent unhappy marriages and marriage breakdown. Some of them commended the new high school courses on preparation for marriage. Some spoke strongly against couples living with in-laws because their own marriages had been jeopardized in this way.

One woman with three or four children says that she had had an operation a year ago which will prevent her from having more children and she would recommend this step for any separated woman who has had children and who does not wish to increase her family responsibility further. Another said that every girl, before marriage, should know her rights in case anything should go wrong with the marriage. She said that counselling is too late after things have gone wrong. A young woman who is contemplating marriage should also know about the community resources through which her rights could be secured if necessary. Another and younger woman said that she wished she had known more about what her rights were when she separated because at that time she actually assumed that she had no rights. She had become frightened because of her husband's threats against the children's lives. He had also threatened to remove them to a distant part of the country.

The Future

As for their future, the parents with few exceptions did not seem to have high hopes. It was sad that they could not be more optimistic because many are still young. Frequently they said that they were just getting through one day at a time. Some were utterly realistic. "This is my future", said one attractive girl with four children; "I'll never be able to get out of this." (She meant public assistance and public housing.) "I would never consent to live in a common-law union and no man is going to marry a woman with all this family responsibility".

The women frequently wished for a good house of their own.

- One mother of seven children, in her early 30's, living in poor surroundings, said that the thing she would like most would be a home of her own. But she said she had no hope that she would ever have one unless, she added with rather a grim smile, she won it in

some kind of lottery. The other possibility is that she might get her own home after the children are older and off her hands. She thinks that things may be a little better for the children than they have been for her -- at least she hopes so. She mentioned especially that she hopes her daughter will not marry too young. She herself was married at 16.

Some would like better jobs, if only it were possible:

- She would like to have a better job but she doubts that she will ever have the chance. Maybe she would have a better chance if she gave up employment and went on social assistance. She could spend more time with her child and have a chance to take some extra training herself. While she speaks of this possibility there seems little reason to believe that she could ever turn in this direction. In thinking of her daughter's future, she mentioned particularly that she would like to think that her daughter would have a chance to grow up before getting into an early marriage. She says she fully subscribes to the new moral law "thou shalt not bring an unwanted child into the world". She would like her child to have a chance to do what she wants with her life, to be normal, to be aware and to get a broadly based education through travel as well as through schooling.

Some are trying to look to the future, against great odds, like this woman who has a large family and not very good health:

- She feels that she must look to the time when the children are away and on their own. She would not be content to sit on social assistance indefinitely and she feels she must keep in mind that the future may hold something for her. She had a little commercial training in high school, and she feels that with hard work it would be possible to better herself when the opportunity comes. As for the children, she says that, like every other parent, she wants more for her children than she has had. She would like them to have good educations and good positions and she would like them to marry well in the sense of marrying people who would treat them as human beings. She believes that a woman's place is in the home but not as a doormat.

Toward a New Humanism

As everyone knows, the literature of our culture and our communications media are full of ideals about motherhood.

But let us introduce to readers a young black woman, a beautiful person, with gay affectionate children. She is gentle and loving, which is what our society expects a mother to be. Nevertheless, the good citizens of Canada

would hardly believe how savagely she has been exploited. She speaks wistfully about what she would like in the future. She would like to marry again, although she has no one in mind. She would like a man who would love her and the children -- someone who would come home and she would have a great big dinner ready, and afterwards they would spend the evening together, and he would be loving to her and all of the children. He would be someone who would know that she is really a person instead of a sex convenience. He would talk everything over with her.

Such outbursts may appear primitive. Painful they certainly are. Yet in them is evidence, however confused, that exploited people are beginning to feel that life should have held something different for them, and wherever there is that feeling there is hope for the future.

In an article entitled "Family Healing in a Troubled World", Nathan W. Ackerman⁶ says that a change in family living can happen only within a larger change, a creative rebirth of the entire social community. The major question, he claims, is how to move away from an orientation to power, acquisition and a master-slave pattern of exploitation to a humanistic set of values.

THE CHILDREN

How are the children of one-parent families getting along? The interviews with parents left the impression that relatively few of them were in the habit of trying to make such assessments. Some were, however.

- This mother believes that her relationship to her children is a healthy one. She encourages them to communicate with her and tries very hard to understand and appreciate their achievements and their mistakes. She attaches great importance to clothing and appearance. "My children are well dressed and can compare favourably with any other child". She displayed a Confirmation picture with pride. The children were never placed outside their home, even with relatives. "This is a thing I would never permit to happen", said she.

- This mother feels apprehension about the future of her sons, especially when she hears and sees things about drug addiction. She says she is extremely fortunate in having such good boys as hers seem to be. Two have paper routes, and out of the money they earn they bought bikes and provide their own spending money. One has a counsellor who is his recreation program advisor and they have excellent group discussions.

- This father says it is very hard to tell whether his young child is seriously affected by the breakdown in the home relationship. The child heard everything anyway and has certainly been given a full explanation. It was interesting to him that the child seemed to want to help him -- seemed to want to make him happier at the time of the breakdown. He was unhappy before the separation; afterwards he was more open and communicative. This father himself had a feeling of tremendous relief after the separation, a feeling that "I am out of it at last", and this probably made his child feel happier.

Some parents believe that their children perceive them as hating each other, and as the children are part of both parents, they themselves are divided within themselves. Whether these parents are right or wrong in their diagnosis, they are undoubtedly right that some children are casualties in the wars between parents.

The experience of some of the widows, although not all of them, was markedly different.

- Although she wanted the children to get over the extreme grief over their father's death, this mother is very anxious that they not forget him. They all visit the cemetery regularly. She says, "I do not want them to forget, because he was a good man". They had been married 23 years when he died.

- When their father died the daughters were too young to remember him. Nevertheless their mother believes that the absence of a father in the home has had an effect on them. She thinks her daughters have been rather timid in their relationship with me. She thinks that they would have adjusted earlier and more easily if they had had their father with them.

There were numerous reports of absent parents who never came to see their children, never wrote to them or sent them gifts, and who broke promises more often than not. In a few instances the children were reported to fear the return of the absent parent because of previous abuse. It should be emphasized that these comments apply to absent mothers as well as absent fathers.

A certain number of children and young people have the advantage of kindly and attentive father substitutes. Grandfathers -- fathers of either the remaining or absent parent or both -- often play this part, as do uncles, adult brothers and neighbours. But on the whole it is sad that more relatives, neighbours and fellow-parishioners do not give more of their time to fatherless youngsters. How many people stop to think that weekends are bad times for these children. In many two-parent families, Saturday is father's day. This is the day on which children go out with their dads to fish, play ball, buy the groceries and so forth.

How does the remaining parent explain the absence of the other parent? Some of the parents need sympathetic advice on this point, especially from other sole parents who have tried to find the least damaging methods. What can be said to the little boy who declares, "My daddy is a bad man. He hit me and he hit my mother."? Or what can be said to the small girl who keeps asking if they can go back to their father? What does a mother advise a child to say when schoolmates tease him about having no father?

- These two girls miss their father. They sometimes say that they would like him to come back and they sometimes ask why he left. To this question, their mother replies that he got fed up.

- This child of six years is just beginning to raise questions about his father. Recently he asked for the first time where his daddy was and his mother simply replied that his daddy was in another city, giving the name of the city. This seemed to satisfy him.

What are we to make of situations in which young women, speaking with great sincerity, say that they would like to remarry or to be reconciled so that they could "make a home for their children"? When one responds that in actual fact they are now, by their own efforts, making homes for their children, they look incredulous. They are, of course, brainwashed by a community stereotype that prefers to ignore the variety of family lifestyles in the world today.

The most thoughtful parents talked about the importance of providing a feeling of stability in the lives of their children, to compensate for the moving about or the breaks in relationships that they have suffered.

- One person said that if one parent is gone it is extremely important for the child to feel that there is stability with the other parent and with any other adult at home. It would not have made for stability if she had been forced to engage a series of housekeepers. She was fortunate in her selection of a housekeeper and the fact that she has been able to retain the same one.

- Another woman said that she has steadily refused to work on Saturday or Sunday because the children are at home then. She had been in a line of work in which she could often have earned some extra money by working on the weekends, but she has resisted this temptation.

- A father said that, as far as being at home with the children is concerned, it is not that there is very much to do in supervising them because they are comparatively responsible young people, but he is firmly convinced that a parent's presence is needed.

Some Danger Signals

Although only thorough social assessments could evaluate some of the home situations, it seemed to us in this Inquiry that we were sometimes seeing danger signals in parent-child relationships.

1. There may be danger where a sole mother who is lonely for companionship is turning to one child, usually a teenager, for her principal emotional support, and thereby setting up tensions in the emotional climate of the home for the teenager and for the other children.
2. At the other extreme we thought we saw some evidences of scapegoating. One of them seemed glaring. Scapegoating is of course a familiar phenomenon in family life. In a one-parent family, the parent has no partner and there may be no older sibling who could identify the behaviour for what it is and apply a brake.
3. Some parents realize how easily they could become over-protective. One woman felt that she had to actually fight against over-protectiveness. For instance, when her 10-year-old son wanted to learn scuba diving she had a real struggle with herself before she agreed with his plan. Another said that she became an over-protective mother as soon as her husband died. She was very conscious of the fact that he always gave the children what they wanted, within reason, and now they couldn't have everything they wanted. Another mother admitted that she spoils her children and tries to make up to them for the loss of their father. Every time she gets her welfare allowance she feels almost obligated to buy them a toy or something. She mentioned that she feels young when she plays ball with the children and enjoys it.
4. There was the danger of seeing in a child the absent spouse. Not infrequently a parent would end a statement of grievances about a wilful teenager with the words, "she is just like her father" -- or mother, as the case may be.
5. The men said that they found it harder to deal with daughters than sons. One of them put it clearly by saying that with the boys he believes he can be direct and rough, while the girls are more apt to be touchy and emotional, which he finds disconcerting.

Responsibility and Authority

The families differ widely in the amount of responsibility in the home that is given to the children. Some mothers never seem to involve even the older children in household tasks. In other families, the older children help with the work and some parents realize that it is better for them to have this experience if certain safeguards are maintained.

- This mother is one who said that she did not find it especially hard to raise her children as a sole parent. It was not so hard that she ever thought of giving them up. This was because each child had a share of the work and they were all fairly responsible.

- A father says that he has had no cause to really worry about the children. He gets mad sometimes when he comes home expecting a meal to be ready and finds that the girls have goofed off somewhere, but 90 per cent of the time they are reasonably good about taking responsibility with comparatively few hassles. The household routine is not strictly organized except for a few tasks -- for example, on Saturday morning the older daughter does the laundry, but each person is responsible for his or her ironing.

- A mother explained that it has been important to protect her 14-year-old daughter from taking too much responsibility. She believes that a young girl at this age needs recreation and her daughter has been almost too willing to share in the household responsibility. She is doing well at school.

The oldest boy in a one-parent family has a special place and one that deserves more serious study than it has been given. Some of the older boys are expected by their mothers to give guidance or direction to their younger brothers and sisters and they are meeting these expectations with varying degrees of competence. Occasionally a mother resents a son's attempted assumption of the role of the man of the family. Other mothers are understanding and wise. When one couple separated, a serious lad of 10 years asked his mother, "Am I the head of the house now?"

The problem of authority was very frequently mentioned by mothers in terms that the following extracts will illustrate.

- This mother says that her child does not listen to her or doesn't hear her. When she visits her sisters and brothers with their families she sees how much more control the father has over the children. "A man's voice can do a lot more with a child."

- A mother with several children said that her biggest problem is that of discipline. She says that before the separation she had left matters of discipline to her husband -- which raises many questions in light of other statements she made about her husband's violent abusiveness. She says that her communications with the children are good. They talk freely to her and, if anything, her difficulty is that she sees their side too much.

A few parents seem to imply that the sole parent has some advantages.

As one of the men put it, "Nobody disputes the orders of one parent".

Nevertheless, he admitted that his own children are comparatively independent and responsible and that he has not faced the severe problems to be found in some homes.

Most mothers seemed to assume that their problems of discipline were unique or that these problems were to be found only in one-parent families. Nevertheless their statements on authority and discipline, of which the above are only a sampling, are reflections of our whole society. In an article titled "Whatever Happened to Respect for our Elders?"; N. Bruce McLeod⁷ says this about young people: "Father, at the dining room table, no longer sounds like Moses to them. Nor will he, ever again. Moral authority, for them, has changed. Father's values, though they may still be respected, are no longer automatically accepted (either by agreement or rebellion which is often just acceptance in reverse). Father's values are seen and heard as one, not necessarily the best, of many value systems."

The distress and indignation of these mothers on the subject of authority raises some uncomfortable questions about how our culture has in the past perceived the role of a father, and whether mothers are assuming the continued existence of a world that is gone. Equally uncomfortable are the related questions about the role of a mother. If a changing society is confused about the roles of parents in two-parent homes, it has no answer of any kind about the role of the sole parent. To help sole parents in the exploration of their role is a massive social enterprise waiting to be undertaken.

Absent Parents' Access to Children

The absent parent's access to the children is important in every situation in which the parent actually avails himself of the privilege. In some instances, the arrangements work out well. In other instances they are destructive.

- This person told us that it was fortunate her son was able to retain a close connection with his father. Both of them agreed to explain their divorce on grounds of incompatibility, which happened to be the truth.

- This divorced couple also remained on friendly terms. The father has married again and his second wife's parents live on a farm. The little boy is very fond of going to the farm with his father. It is a weekly adventure that is highly prized.

- This young woman faced a difficulty that is not uncommon. Her husband did not want a child in the first place. This attitude and other evidences of his inability to adjust to the role of husband and father led to the separation and subsequent divorce. Nevertheless, she was bothered by his harassment. Prior to the separation, he never wanted to go near the child but after the separation he insisted on his right to visit, although he used the time to argue with his wife.

- One of the men who is allowed access, with the proviso that he keep up his support payments for the children who are not living with him, says he feels that he is buying the child like soap. The deceitfulness of the situation bothers him too, when he hears that his wife has said to the child, "You may go to visit your father but don't tell your stepfather".

In these contacts with sole parents we were hearing only one side of the story. Many of the parents themselves mentioned this fact. Nevertheless, we think we found enough distress around this question of access to children to warrant the conviction that this subject needs far more serious attention than it has ever received. Access seems to be seldom used with the aim of building something of value into the life of the child. Too often it works to the child's detriment, compounding the problems that plagued him before his parents separated. There is need of intensive study of parents' access to children that are separated from them, with the principal focus on the welfare of the children.

Community Support

What support do communities provide for the children of sole parents?

At the most practical level the larger communities provide a range of recreation activities. Parents interviewed commonly reported that boys, especially, belong to the Y, to Al-A-Teen, Scouts, Cubs and a great variety of church programs. Parents were emphatic that the importance of group and sports activities cannot be exaggerated. A common complaint was that membership in some of the youth organizations is too expensive.

In spite of all the public alarm about teenagers, one-parent families can produce examples of boys and girls who are excellent students, who earn their own spending money by working on Saturday, who have no patience with drinking or smoking, who enjoy many forms of recreation and who are leaders in a variety of organizations.

Other parents expressed regret, uneasiness or resentment about some aspects of their children's social relationships.

Some of the parents regretted the company that their children keep and usually did not blame their children as much as their circumstances. A mother in a very small community felt that her children made friends only with what she called the riff-raff of the place, and this was because of their poor house and poor clothing. It was a situation in which there could be no criticism of the moral standards of the home, although in this community there is probably prejudice against any woman who is alone with her family.

In other families, community criticism of the moral standards of the parents does indeed brush off on the children. Especially in smaller communities where everybody knows everybody else, children can be outcasts. The neighbours righteously report their criticisms to the child welfare authorities instead of trying to befriend the children. It is frightening to realize that these children have no chance to develop feelings of self-worth and yet at least some of them are beautiful children with basically good potential.

Many parents were resentful of what they considered to be widespread prejudice against "kids from broken homes". They hear people say things like, "He was brought up by his mother therefore he must be a queer". As one mother said, this sort of community hostility is especially hard for children and teenagers who cannot communicate and who cannot meet their problems head on.

- She is having a hard time with one neighbour who blames her children when there is any misconduct in the street and who calls the police or the Children's Aid Society.

- Recently, a neighbour disturbed this little girl dreadfully by telling her about her father's misbehaviour with another woman. She came home in tears. The mother had always told the younger children that their father had gone away and is now living with some other people. The child was so badly affected by this incident that she wanted to stay home from school. She was afraid that her mother would also leave them.

- In spite of her unhappy married life, this woman believes that children are better off having two parents in the home, even if the two parents are fighting with each other. In this connection, she spoke of the cruelty of children towards other children, and said that neighbourhood children are apt to frighten others with tales that the Children's Aid Society will take them away if their parents are ever divorced.

The Children at School

How the children were getting along at school was one of the questions introduced in every interview with a parent who had school children.

The parents almost always knew what grades the children were in and whether they were doing well or poorly. Only a small number -- about half-a-dozen -- indicated a close contact with any persons or groups at the school. Parents' attitudes to the schools varied. Some who are basically uneasy about their own status said things that indicated their fear of school officials. There were some who appreciated what schools had been able to do for their children. Some parents had been embarrassed by the cost of school activities. In a few instances there was vague resentment and, in one case, anger. Here are examples:

- This little girl learns slowly. She was not getting along well at school. Her mother, who is single and very poor, was sure that something different should be done and after some time she gathered up her courage to go to see the principal. Apparently the principal got things moving. The child was transferred to a small special class containing only about 12 children. She is doing well, with good marks, and her mother feels that she is getting a good chance at last.

- For another professional woman, relationships with the school system, while not bad, were never wholly satisfactory. Teachers tended to complain that her son was not achieving to his full capacity, although he never failed a year and did many things besides getting a formal education. Her connections with PTA were negative because she could never seem to feel interested. When her son was a small child she had an experience that changed her approach for the rest of his school life. When he first entered kindergarten the administrators and teachers did not know that he was a child in a one-parent family. Later she voluntarily informed

them of this fact and she felt that after that point they changed their approach to the child. They seemed to be watching him for signs of disturbance. After this experience, she did not again volunteer information to any school. Sometimes the fact of her status would come out naturally in her conversation with school people, but she remained a bit suspicious of how it would affect their attitude.

- One of the fathers recalled an incident in which a teacher struck his small son. This father had been a sharp critic of the methods of discipline in schools and he was furious. He went to the teacher and made his views known. The teacher annoyed him further by making a reference, probably intended to be sympathetic, about her understanding that the child's home life placed him under special pressures.

This was not the only parent who mentioned corporal punishment and other forms of physical punishment in the schools. Some of the mothers seemed vaguely uneasy about these methods but for the most part they assumed that that was the way it had always been and therefore that was the way it always would be. In an article in the Saturday Review entitled "Why Students Want Their Constitutional Rights", Nat Hentoff says: "So far, I have focused entirely on what might be termed psychic injuries to high school students' sense of themselves as free citizens or as young men and women learning how to be free. What has astounded me, in the course of preparing this article, is the continued presence in parts of this country of school authorities who still assault children physically. Corporal punishment in the public school is permitted in 49 states. Although the practice is slowly diminishing, physical punishment is still administered with righteous zeal in many school districts."⁸ A new book called Violence Against Children, based on the study of 13,000 cases in the United States, says that much of the present violence against children could be prevented if the public recognized the fact that U.S. culture encourages the use of physical force in the rearing of children.⁹

Children in Deep Trouble

It is necessary to emphasize at this point the crucial need for parents to shake off the notion that things must be as they always were and to see with fresh eyes the circumstances in which their children are placed.

Among the 113 families interviewed, we found small children in jeopardy and teenagers in deep trouble.

- A little boy of 10 years, the oldest of a large family, was in trouble a year ago. His mother did not seem able to describe the details of this trouble. She simply said that he was getting out of hand. She went to the Children's Aid Society and they advised that Jamie should go to live with his father. Jamie did go to live with his father but came back after 24 hours. He didn't like the woman that his father is living with, or her children, and he didn't get enough to eat.

- Another boy of the same age, with a clever, sensitive face, is the oldest of his mother's two families. He has serious emotional problems with pronounced mood swings. He is rebellious at home and school and gets into a lot of fights.

- Heather, aged seven, is "a bundle of nerves". She has been stealing. At school she pretends that she has a daddy. School readers always mention "mommy and daddy", and her mother thinks that this keeps Heather stirred up about the absence of her father. The mother has found a younger child, a little boy, extremely difficult to handle because of terrible temper tantrums. She says he was at a bad age when the separation occurred. He was frightened many times when his father was under the influence of alcohol. At the kindergarten, teachers say he is very unruly. His mother says she tells the kindergarten teachers that he is perfectly all right at home.

Trouble among the girls in the families, although reported much less frequently, appeared to be severe in each instance.

- The mother of this young girl who is now in training school is convinced that if there had been a man in the house her daughter's trouble would not have occurred. The first difficulty was her violent temper. Her mother took her to a psychiatric clinic but this did not help. She began to experiment with drugs. She got into a violent physical conflict with her mother one night and ran away. The clinic had her picked up and she was taken before the juvenile court. She said there that she hated her mother and

threatened to kill her. She said she started to take drugs in order to make her mother angry. She is getting along well in the training school and is progressing in her studies. She is getting into sports again and seems to have a better attitude toward her mother.

In the biggest cities, with their crime-ridden ghettos, there were a few stories such as those reported in the news media.

- Josie had a disturbed childhood in a home with a high degree of fear and hostility and a father with a crime record. She has been before the juvenile court and in detention. If she has any further difficulty with the law she will face charges as an adult. She has lived with some of the most violent groups in her city. She has been on drugs, has been an alcoholic and has been beaten up. She has had periods away from home when her mother did not know where she was. Her mother hopes that she has turned the corner now because she is living at home and is beginning a training course. In talking about her daughter, this mother gave a vivid impression of her fears and distress, especially during the time Josie was missing. She is determined never to close the door on Josie but to convince her daughter that she will always be there and will stand behind her. Her interpretation of Josie's behaviour is simply that she glamorizes crime in the belief that somehow one can get rich quick.

These acting-out young girls were sometimes in families where there was no great financial stress but in the main they were in homes supported by social assistance. The same could be said of the boys, whose problems, however, appeared to be far more numerous.

- Charles is 16. He came to live with his mother when his father put him out. He did not get on well with his stepmother. He was in trouble while he lived with his father and was put on probation. Recently he was charged with shoplifting and this led to detention. It was his mother who laid the charge about his stealing and she explained, "there is no use of his saying he does it to help his mother". Charles is a bitter sort of a boy according to his mother. He was always upset by violent quarrels in the home.

- One of the most worrisome problems in this family has been connected with Tony. After he dropped out of school last year he went to work with an uncle who suddenly notified the mother that Tony was taking drugs. Since then, because of drug misuse, he has been a hospital patient and has also had counselling from an outpatient department.

His mother claims that the city is full of drugs including heroin. She thinks Tony is getting along better but she claims it is almost impossible for a boy of his age in this city to make friends with his peers who are not using drugs. She says that many teenagers are taking drugs without the parents having the slightest idea of what they are doing.

- In one home, two boys, John and Roy, were in trouble over truancy. Roy is quick tempered. At school he was considered incorrigible and was sent to a training school. John was staying out late and "giving her a hard time", and both boys were bringing home things that were obviously stolen. She was afraid that they would get into more trouble and reported them. She says that she considers it is very hard for a mother to keep in communication with a growing boy. The boys missed their father who left several years ago, and they particularly missed going out with him, which had been their custom. Whether anything will help these boys seems an open question. The probation officer secured a group home for John after his mother went to court about her inability to manage him. John loved the group home; it was in the country and he still keeps in touch with the people there. Roy, on the other hand, ran away from a foster home in which he was placed and it was afterwards that he went to the training school. There is a possibility that their father may be able to take John and Roy at least for the summer.

Is there any hope for these children who are already in deep water before they are 10 years of age and for young people who at the age of 16 or 17 already appear to be destroyed? We are compelled to say, not too much hope. A boy or girl needs to keep out of trouble because once in, it is a hard job to get out. Nevertheless, there have been times when a fortunate change has been made in a child's circumstances and prospects.

Sometimes the parent supplies the necessary resourcefulness and determination.

- While the father of one family was alive, they lived in a subsidized housing development. After the father died they began to dislike the place, partly because the children were getting into trouble and one was put on probation. At considerable cost to her own convenience the mother moved the family to another and smaller community, mainly because she thought this would be a better place to raise her six children. Today they are thankful that they moved. Their troubles could have become worse, but as it is they are all getting along well.

- Sometimes an organization takes the initiative and then remains in close touch with the family. One family came to the attention of a family and children's agency when the neighbours reported that the children were often alone. The mother claims that this complaint was unjust because she had made arrangements for a neighbour to look after the children. However, she appreciated the contact, which has continued since that time. The social worker has been attentive, calling on her at least once a week.

- Sometimes several resources are mobilized to help one family. This was illustrated in one of the smaller communities. A boy of 12, in a very deprived home, began to defy his mother and trouble threatened. The family doctor counselled him and also talked with his mother. Their communication improved tremendously. At the same time, the lad got into the Y for physical recreation. He has had a close connection with the church and its program for boys and he knows the priest well. At present there is no problem.

SOME SPECIAL PEOPLE

In this project, interviewing meant becoming immersed, if only for an hour or two, in the deeply-felt experiences of another person. Sometimes one listened in astonishment to accounts, not of single acts of courage in sudden danger, but of courage sustained over years -- years of sadness caused by the loss of a husband and father and years of anxiety about the everyday needs of children. Yet, on the whole, there were many happy years, too.

In one family the husband died after a short illness, leaving his wife with three little girls under school age.^A The young widow had been crippled by polio. More recently, as a mature woman, she has lived in a wheelchair. From her little home, with the lowest conceivable income, she has launched her children as well-educated young citizens. Feeling that her insights should be communicated to others, we asked her what advice she could offer to any girl who found herself in the position of a sole parent. Here it is:

1. She would advise any girl to get a trade or training. There are too many who imagine they will never need to support themselves for a single day if once they marry. This is far from reality.

2. She would say to any young woman, "don't ever run up bills". Perhaps it may be all right to charge for small purchases but it is not all right with larger items.

3. She would say "don't be too proud to accept help from people". Her daughters wore hand-me-downs until they got into their teens. Last winter the youngest daughter had her first new coat. She could assure young women that they can regain their independence later on, but there may be a time when they cannot afford any foolish pride about accepting what people offer them.

4. The financial limitations of a sole parent should be fully and carefully explained to the children. It is not enough to say "you can't have this or that". Children will respond to an honest explanation.

5. Even if the family finances are very limited there is no reason why the children cannot be taught the uses and value of money. She made a practice of taking her daughters to stores where they would carefully examine pieces of meat and other merchandise while their mother explained how to select. In those days, any kind of meat, even the cheapest, was a luxury to them. She taught them how to check prices, one store against the other. As a result, a daughter who is now away at college is making a very good job of managing her limited funds. She taught the children to buy good quality in clothes -- the best quality wherever possible -- and when the girls were small she always bought a size too big so that they would have three seasons of wear out of any garment.

6. Finally, it is absolutely necessary for a sole parent to know how to cope with loneliness. When she was first widowed and the children were very small she felt that it wouldn't take much to drive her into melancholia. She realized that she must get hold of herself. As far as she is concerned, she finds that contacts with people mean more to her than anything else. She uses her telephone a great deal and she writes many letters to people all over Canada.

To these six points we want to add another, and it is this:

She identifies herself with the interests and ideas of young people.

On the afternoon of this conversation, the youngest daughter, a high school student, was away at her Saturday job, but a friend of hers dropped in. She and our hostess had a spirited argument about recent campus unrest. They did not agree, but they talked as equals who liked each other. They were both looking forward to the Sunday afternoon hockey game and expected to be in despair if Montreal lost.

On the other hand, the imagination can play a sudden trick and create a picture of what people might have been if the circumstances of their birth and the opportunities of their lives had been different. Then there comes the tormenting sense of a waste of life, of lost happiness, of creativity, that is behind the facades of our prosperous-looking self confident Canadian communities.

In conversation with a woman whose marriage had been frightful, and some of whose children are now going astray, you find it not surprising that her face should be sombre and her manner reserved. Then, as she speaks of the children's schoolwork, she mentions by chance that she likes history. You ask her if she has watched TV programs such as Kenneth Clark's "Civilisation" and in an instant her face changes and sparkles. She is no longer an alienated, resentful woman. She is a bright, alert, happy individual and you think to yourself, "she would have made a remarkable teacher".

At another time and place you are sitting in a poor little room talking to a young woman whose ego has been wounded as a child and as a young wife until she has become almost nothing. But at the end, out of nowhere, with a very shy smile, she says that she would have loved to ride horseback. In a flash you can see her with her long limbs and strong wrists, riding a fine horse -- if life had been unimaginably different for her.

There are two groups of special people: fathers alone with children, and single women with children. The individuals within these groups are unique, but the fact that they share certain advantages and disadvantages is sufficient to warrant attention as groups.

Fathers Alone with Children

Because only 10 men were interviewed -- although there are others on the Advisory Committee of this Inquiry -- it would be idle to claim that we secured a comprehensive picture of the problems of male sole parents. We believe, however, that we heard enough from the men, and from the heads of social agencies, to be able to say with some assurance that there is probably

an increasing number of men in this group of parents and that these men should be able to depend upon more community resources than are now available to them.

From the standpoint of male parents, the greatest gap in community services is, of course, in homemaker services and other forms of day care for children.

- For one man that we interviewed, deserted and with three small children, getting homemaker service and day care has been an unusually serious problem. He had several housekeepers, some of whom were unsatisfactory and all of whom left him. Subsidized day care proved to be a better arrangement even if it meant getting the children up at 5 a.m. so that they could be left at the day care centre downtown before their father went to work. Another father who was suddenly left a widower with six children could not find a homemaker. In his city there is a homemaker service but his needs did not fit the agency regulations. The child welfare authorities offered foster home care for the children but he absolutely, and probably angrily, refused to have the children separated from him. This father has held several different jobs but his best and steadiest job was the one he had at the time of his wife's death. He continued in this job for a few months after his wife died but it was shift work and one of the shifts was at night. He knew that he simply couldn't leave the children alone overnight because the oldest was only 15. He said, "I wasn't going to leave them alone for love or money". He gave up this job and hasn't had anything to equal it since. Canada Manpower is good to him and if any job comes up that they think he could handle they call him immediately.

- Among those who talked to us the man who had the best arrangement was one who advertised, received 25 applications, and employed a very satisfactory housekeeper at \$150 a month. Only one of the men found his solution or at least a partial solution by going to live with his in-laws after his wife's death. The children are cared for by their grandmother. This father could not afford to pay the full cost of a housekeeper and although there was a local organization providing subsidized homemaker services, it was not equipped to meet a long-term need. Although the arrangement with the in-laws is the best available, it has disadvantages. It cannot be easy for the children's grandmother to start raising a family again. For the father, social life is restricted in some ways. For example, visits from his own family are not as frequent as they were when he had his own home. In other words he cannot feel quite at home nor is he altogether happy about this type of home life for the children. Another man entered his boys in a good residential school when his wife died.

This plan was not entirely the result of there being only one parent in the family; the father thinks that a period at a residential school is good for the average boy because a boy has a better chance to socialize and maybe get away from some of the pressures in most families.

It is easy to see that a man's plan for his motherless children depends on what he can afford as well as on his understanding of what would be best for the children.

As far as community services are concerned, it is clear that a man has a great advantage if he knows his way around the maze of health and social services. Two of the men interviewed, because of their professional positions, knew where and how to look for service. Others did not, and time and opportunities were lost. Moreover, there was at least one situation in which a service terminated and the father was then without a contact with any of the community network of services. This may happen if day care terminates when a child moves on to public school or when a homemaker service ends in accordance with agency regulations. No one seems to take up the slack.

Particularly hard for motherless families is the great scarcity of supervisory services for school children during lunch hours, after school and during the summer vacation.

For the male sole parent, there are obvious advantages in being connected with a large, close-knit extended family. Failing that, or in addition to that, it is important to have close friends, not to lean on constantly but to know they are there with an hour to spare now and then for talking things over. One parent adds that, in a motherless home, girls who are entering puberty need the counsel of a practical, understanding woman regarding their physical development and related questions of dress and cosmetics. They would need a person that they knew well, who would shop and talk with them. In some families this need could be met by a relative or close friend.

The men with larger families recognized the need for some degree of orderliness in the management of the home. One of them, who started with no advantages beyond the important fact that his deceased wife had been a good housekeeper, said that he quickly found two things to be important. First, it is important to get the children organized to look after the household; in his home, each one takes certain tasks. Second, it is important for the father to make some rules about when the children must be in at night. Until the children reached the age of 16 they were expected to be in by 9:30 p.m. At all times their father insisted on knowing where they were. He thinks that these rules are absolutely essential. He feels that the children have got along well. He says that they have done a great deal for him and he feels that it is his responsibility to do as much as he can for them.

Two of the men believed that women could get help easily if they were sole parents, whereas men are expected to make their own arrangements with practically no help from community resources. One of the men, although he himself was getting along well, told about a father in another city. This man, with five children, had no trade and only temporary jobs. He was dressed poorly although his children were fairly well dressed. The family had come from abroad and had no relatives in this country. The father was regarded as employable and got no sympathy from the welfare establishment. The comment was made that a man in this position seems to have no right to help from public welfare and he has no right to any help from his wife. If the wife in the case is employed, why should she not be partly responsible for the support of the family she has left? As it is, she goes completely scot-free.

Among the men we interviewed, there were indeed one or two situations in which it might have been possible for the deserting mother to contribute to the support of the children. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women met this question head on by their recommendations 108 and 109 that the laws be amended so that a wife who is financially able to do so may be held to support her husband and children.

The men seem to be finding it just as difficult as the women to have any social life in the evenings or even to continue their attendance at evening training courses. One or two were troubled, or had been troubled previously, by a buildup of tension for which the only relief was in drinking.

It is suggested that people in the helping professions, in the fields of medicine, law and social service, should become more sensitive to the possibility that men who are sole parents are often whistling in the dark and that under a mask of independence, which society expects them to assume, they are often groping for appropriate help.

We liked the quality of the feeling that the fathers have for their children. To perceive this quality of feeling is to recognize how much children are missing when fathers, although they reside with their families, have very little time for their children. From this standpoint, fathers in one-parent homes may have something to say that some of the fathers in two-parent homes should be hearing.

Although the men who are sole parents have very little time to give to responsibilities outside their homes, they could make some very practical contributions to the work of the boards and committees of organizations that are most necessary to them, such as day care organizations, homemaker services and counselling services.

Single Women and Their Children

Two statistical facts are, first, that among all live births, the percentage of children born to parents who are not married to each other is increasing: In 1960 it was 4.3 per cent and in 1967 it was 8.3 per cent. About one-third of the mothers are under 20 years of age. Second, there is a dramatic increase in the percentage of single women who are keeping their children with them instead of arranging to have them adopted. For example, we found that in the Children's Aid Society in Winnipeg, 30 per cent of single mothers kept their children in 1965 and four years later, 53.5 per cent did so. These Winnipeg figures reflect a trend across the whole country.

Most people are curious about the reasons for this trend. Among the 11 single mothers who talked to us, there were extreme differences in the reasons and in the ability of the young women to interpret them.

- One said that prior to her child's birth she had decided on adoption. After the birth, adoption was postponed for medical reasons. During this postponement she began to think about unloving adoptive parents she had known and she became afraid that her child would fall into such a situation. Moreover, she had a growing feeling of her personal responsibility. She was responsible for the child's birth and could not disclaim responsibility for the child's life. She has no regrets about her final decision.

Other parents were vague.

- One said that she thought she could do just as well for the baby as any adopting parents and yet she has very severe economic, emotional, and medical problems, including drug abuse.

- One parent spoke of her experience in arranging for the adoption of a second child. Her first child was about four years old at the time. The social worker strongly advised adoption of this second child and she took their advice. To this day, 10 years later, she feels badly about it. "Not a day passes that I don't think about her". The day before she left the hospital she saw the baby "to identify it".

- Another young parent had a different factor to consider -- that of a child of a racial minority. She said that the possibility of adoption was canvassed and everyone advised her to relinquish the baby. She didn't feel like doing so, although she did seriously consider the question of whether the baby would have a better life if she gave him up. She made her decision on the basis of her knowledge that a black child is not easily adopted and that she would hate to see him in foster homes that are often miserable places.

In the next illustration, the quite different reason indicates the immaturity of some of the girls who make these momentous decisions without much help or advice.

- When she became pregnant this very young girl thought of getting into a residence for unmarried mothers but there was no place available. The child welfare office advised her to work in a private home but she didn't want to do so. They also advised adoption. She recalls that they almost urged adoption. She didn't agree. She believes that all adopting parents are "awfully old". She did not want her child to be with old people. She "more or less decided" to keep the child and it was evidently not a great decision on her part but more in the nature of a drift toward what she would rather do at the moment. Afterwards the child welfare worker saw her once and advised her to apply for public welfare.

The 11 young women we interviewed were mostly in their 20's with one under 20 and two over 30. In age, the children varied from infancy to 14 years, with most of them between two and five years of age.

The parents had had very different early lives. Two described their upbringing as "beautiful" or "very happy". At least three of them came from homes that they said were "awful" or "broken", and said that they themselves had been in various kinds of trouble. In education they varied all the way from dropouts in the early grades to high school graduates and some who had post-high-school technical training. In intelligence, two of them appeared to be among the most alert and perceptive people that we interviewed anywhere.

The mothers, each with one child, who were supported by public assistance, were receiving between \$120 and \$181 a month. Those who were employed were earning some \$3,600 a year. Only one was receiving any contribution from her child's father and this contribution was irregular. The relationships with the fathers had, before the birth, varied from an engagement to marry to one in which the father was probably unidentifiable.

Housing, in all but two instances, was frightful. It was generally worse, we thought, than that of other one-parent families. Here they are, all 11 of them:

1. Moved frequently -- sometimes evicted -- sometimes victim of verbal abuse by landlords. Has fixed up her present basement apartment cheaply but attractively.
2. Paying far too high a proportion of her salary and yet any mother with a small child needs the space and facilities that she has, which are far from luxurious.
3. Good. In a well-kept subsidized housing development in the suburbs. This employed mother pays a normal rent. She is the only one of this group of parents who drives a car.
4. Dreary, poorly furnished top floor room in a bad neighbourhood. Shared bathroom.
5. Extremely squalid in a large badly kept old building.
6. Shares bathroom, no laundry facilities. The child is an infant.
7. Shares bathroom. Long climb to top flat. Heating very poor.
8. One room, far from adequate -- no hot plate, no refrigeration, child is an infant.
9. No place to stay. The mother and a three-year-old child are sleeping in a kind of landlady's crowded living room -- crowded with furniture, birds and animals.
10. Compulsively anxious to move into subsidized housing but probably no chance for any but the largest families. Accommodation at present poor.
11. Flat at the top of a large old building. Poor plumbing. No heavy-duty wiring.

Are these parents aware of any public prejudice? They are. One of them thought that she noticed more antagonism during the time that she lived with another single mother. The shared accommodation made them more conspicuous. One girl's description, even if it sounded immature, had quite a note of reality. She said that she does not like living in this rural community but she would certainly not want to live where she grew up. When she goes there to visit her mother "lots of people give you dirty looks". Here, where she lives by herself, she finds people friendlier, but when people on the street are friendly she wonders if they know about her having a child.

Those who feel comparatively free of prejudice against themselves are the employed young women who are working in places where their domestic status is known, accepted and respected.

Public opinion has changed since the days of The Scarlet Letter and yet some sense of ostracism affected all of these parents. One of them was affected very severely. She had built a wall of secrecy around herself and her child to such an extent that they were both prisoners most of the time.

For the others, what of the future? One of the most clear-sighted of this group of young parents said, "I am afraid to think". She does not want to be married but she would like more time with her child, rather than less, and she would have less if she attempted to upgrade her training, which she may do nevertheless. One person has definite plans for marriage. Regarding those who are emotionally immature, it is hard to believe that they will ever become competent mothers after their children cease to be the dolls that they now enjoy playing with, and when they become boys and girls with characters of their own.

If anything is clear in a complex picture, it is that single mothers are no more alike than the persons in any other group of sole parents or of any parents. This is the point that is made in a substantial piece of recent research -- a U.S. report of a study of over 200 mothers. The report states that no single model can describe these women, the majority of whom are not clearly distinguishable from other large groups of mothers and children, especially mothers who are responsible for households which they must maintain at a very low economic level.¹⁰

Services for Single Mothers

Generalities can be applied to the community services for single mothers more accurately than to the mothers themselves. "Organizations that are anxious to improve the services for single parents seemed to be blocked at every turn". This was the general purport of many statements made by workers in child welfare during this Inquiry. Services for single mothers and their children are assigned low priority. One of the symptoms of this condition is that services in this field were becoming stereotyped. Residences for unmarried girls prior to the birth of their children, and painstaking adoption procedures seemed to satisfy most communities. These methods of service are no longer sufficient to meet the conditions of society today. The need nowadays is for multi-function agencies serving the families of single parents among other families, with lines out to varieties of housing accommodations, to vocational, educational and recreational opportunities and certainly to day care of children.

Conversations with supervisors in the specialized agencies serving single parents indicated how slowly change is being brought about. The agencies are attempting to do a little more followup after the birth of children. Sometimes this can only be by telephone. The young women who keep in touch on their own initiative are apt to be those who are getting along relatively well. In general, their defences are so high that they fail to describe their difficulties in managing as sole parents. In those cases in which a second pregnancy occurs, the great difficulties that have been experienced in taking care of the first child are apt to be expressed at last. Since independence is an important factor in the development of self-respect and in commanding respect from others, it should be a matter of great concern that it is so difficult for a single mother to achieve and maintain economic independence. This very deprivation raises the question of how much the single mother can offer her child and whether the deprivation is bound to be passed on to the child. The lack of any organized family day care is serious in many communities, even in large ones. Family day care has a great deal to offer single mothers and there are a large number who could use this service to good advantage. Even the training programs laid on by Canada Manpower are not much use without an adequate organization of day care facilities. Housing is a terrible problem. Public housing may be developed extensively in a community and yet not made available to a single mother with one child.

A study conducted in Vancouver confirmed some of these points made by the supervisors in agencies¹¹. This was a study of 52 single mothers representing all age ranges. They had many problems in common, the greatest one being the need for day care resources for children. Problems of income management and of housing were also general.

A question that is troubling some of the community services is that of the very immature person who chooses to keep her child with her. In most provinces, there are no rules or regulations about who may or may not retain custody of children, although Saskatchewan provides an exception, with regulations to prevent a young person under 16 years of age from retaining legal custody of a child. In October 1970, a Winnipeg conference on unmarried parents tabled a recommendation which read, "because of our concern for the rights of the child as much as for the rights of the natural mother, we recommend that no girl under the age of 16 should be allowed to keep her child without the permission of the court based on the girl's presentation of a suitable plan".

A few new forms of service are appearing. For example, in Vancouver, there are four cooperative residences providing accommodation for about 15 single mothers and children, with the collaboration of the YWCA and the assistance of homemakers trained and assigned by the Homemaker Department of the Family Service Centres. In Toronto, the Victoria Day Care Services is trying out a downtown residence for single mothers and children as a logical extension of day care services under present social conditions in Toronto. These and similar types of housing are designed to provide only temporary accommodation until permanent arrangements can be made by the parent.

Some school systems are making it possible for pregnant students to continue their education.¹² Sometimes there are correspondence courses or visiting teachers to help a student to keep up her studies. In Winnipeg, through the cooperation of the Children's Aid Society, the Department of Public Health and the Winnipeg school system, daytime classes are provided at the YWCA for unmarried pregnant students. Recreation as well as the schooling is provided.

Calgary offers an example of a special school to provide opportunities for pregnant single girls to continue their education within a flexible program. These and other new enterprises may in time change the general rule which is that a pregnant girl, married or single, is expected to leave school and is seldom encouraged to return. In some school systems, either principals or visiting teachers or both have said that special services to pregnant students are a waste of their time. Possibly, as some have suggested, teacher education courses should give more attention to the problems and needs of sole parents, including single parents.

Apparently very few studies have been made on mothers who keep their children. Research is needed on what services are available after a child is born as well as before, on the extent to which services have changed in response to changing needs, and on current needs and the extent to which they are met or overlooked.

COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR THE ONE-PARENT FAMILY

It is everyday knowledge that our society is changing far more rapidly than ever before -- so rapidly that people can easily lose their sense of direction. Traditionally, a community's social institutions have provided its people with a sense of continuity, a singleness of purpose, an orderly transmission of accepted cultural patterns. Up to this time, the traditional institutions have continued to exist, with the addition of the new institution of the mass media of communication with its unmeasured influence. But although the institutions exist, society lacks consensus about what to expect of them, and about how it wants them to develop. There is disorientation, discontinuity, and where there was singleness of purpose and clarity about values, there is now ambivalence. It is against this changing scene, with all its contradictions and imponderables, that we begin to inquire into the relationship of one-parent families to the community services that are important to them, because these services and the social institutions are still the border checkpoints at which the family meets the community -- the interface of family and community.

1. Public Welfare

Among the people interviewed who are receiving some form of public assistance, we found:

- . Almost unanimous opinion that rates of assistance are too low.
- . Widespread feeling that recipients are in the dark about regulations.
- . A significant amount of criticism of the physical conditions of public welfare offices.

- . Unexpectedly extensive appreciation of the work of public welfare staff, and some expected criticism.
- . Suggestions for change, offered by many who are now recipients and by those, now self-supporting, who were once recipients.
- . People who feel trapped with no way to get ahead.

The loss of a marriage partner means crisis, and usually part of the crisis is financial.

- One father had had substantial insurance which, however, had been allowed to lapse shortly before his sudden death. The widow, left with small children, sold their home and when the debts and current expenses of moving were paid there was nothing left.

- Another young woman was left with small children and with such heavy debts at the time of separation that now, after several years alone, she is still paying off at a rate that amounts to about 20 per cent of her \$6,000 salary.

These are examples of women who acted resourcefully, perhaps because they had something to start with in the form of a little property or training for a job.

Other women, however, appeared to have stumbled around communities looking for help that was hard to find. Some of them experienced delays in obtaining public assistance because of delays in laying charges against husbands. Moreover, when a girl who didn't know the ropes encountered a tight-fisted municipal official, it sometimes meant a long period of deprivation.

- Lou-Ann is an example. For ten months after her husband left she had only the family allowance, at first \$6 and then \$12 after the baby was born. She got into debt. People in the small rural community in which she lived gave her food and through a court order she got \$20 from her husband about four times during those months. Relatives helped her a little, but did not want her to ask for public welfare because it would be a disgrace. However, she finally did apply and was sent from one office to another.

Both offices were curt with her and treated her in an offhand way. During the summer and fall she received from them amounts of \$10, \$15 and another \$15. When she moved into another small community and into her present house, she applied to the regional office of the district and met with an entirely different reception. A social worker called on her in a few days and shortly afterwards her first cheque arrived.

The change in family income that results from the loss of one parent is not always a change for the worse. Several women expressed appreciation of the dependability and regularity of provincial programs of assistance to mothers, and some who were employed or receiving public assistance were glad to be free of debt. Different parents compared past and present, as follows:

- Although her present income is restricted, she can depend upon receiving it regularly, which was not the case before separation.
- She feels that they are getting along better now because they are out of debt, which was such a burden before the separation.
- Having been a widow for 20 years, she finds that her present small income of \$166 a month for herself and one child is like living in the lap of luxury, compared with those early days when she received \$30 a month in cash.

It takes time to make these major adjustments in ways of living. Several women mentioned this fact. Some of them considered that they had tried to adjust too quickly and consequently had made mistakes in judgment.

- One woman with several teenage children recalls that it took her a full year to get on her feet and to get the hang of managing on provincial assistance. She did not know how to make dollars stretch as she does now. She couldn't say "no" to the children when they wanted things that she could not afford. She did not know where to look for low prices. She is now a good budgeter, buyer and organizer, but these skills were not learned in a day.

Among the women interviewed were several who had made mistakes in money matters, and not necessarily in their early days as sole parents. Misuse of credit buying is notorious for undermining family happiness. The examples, of which many were cited, were usually said to have occurred prior to separation,

often leaving burdens of debt on one or both partners. In some instances, debt continued to accumulate after separation. One of these instances provided an example of the remarkable alertness of finance companies.

- A mother, separated for several years and living in perpetual poverty with her large family, explained that her present indebtedness to the finance company would be paid off within the coming year. Subsequently, the finance company wrote her a nice letter, noting that her present debt would soon be discharged, and inquiring if there were anything else that she would like to buy through their good offices. Thus encouraged she went further into debt. She had no idea of interest rates or of how long she would be paying the \$11 a month to which she had committed herself.

Two or three women had taken financial risks to oblige friends or neighbours, and lost out. In more than one instance, it might be supposed that an insecure young woman was trying to buy approval, if not friendship, by underwriting a service charge or by lending to someone who had no notion of repayment. Not everyone is shrewd in business deals. In at least one situation, a woman alone with a large family was misled or probably cheated in buying a house that was far from weatherproof. Another person had a bad time with a furniture debt. She bought her rug and some furniture on one contract. The rug was entirely paid for, and the furniture almost so, in \$5 installments. When she missed paying, the rug and the furniture were both repossessed and there was not a thing she could do about it. Then she had to get furniture through the local public assistance office. As she pointed out, the firm profited at the expense of the public welfare system as well as at her expense.

These examples are familiar and typical. More unexpected were a few instances of persons carrying comparatively heavy life insurance. One person was paying out about 13 per cent of her small income.

Several people described the difficulties and indeed the impossibility of making substantial deposits for rents and telephone service when one is without money and collateral. For one family, this problem might have been fatal.

- A young deserted woman with two little children lives in an isolated house in the country. The nearest neighbour is a mile away. She was told that the installation of a telephone would cost \$9. When she actually applied with her \$9 to have the phone installed, they told her there would be a \$50 deposit. She could not possibly raise this amount of money and she did without the phone. The baby became seriously ill and she ran the mile down the road to get to a phone. The hospital sent an ambulance and there was an emergency operation. She feels that because she was on public welfare the baby might have died.

More than one family told how they had missed the chance to get a suitable apartment because they had no money for a deposit. Many public welfare departments would supply money for this purpose, but by the time the arrangements are made the apartment is likely to be gone.

Several parents mentioned the unfairness of the taxes on shoes and clothing in adult sizes. Even 11-year-olds may take adult sizes. In some communities, there are special exemptions from property taxes. In one such city, for example, a widow with her own home reported that her taxes were \$3.75 last year.

Rates of Assistance

In discussing the rates of public assistance, no one claimed that the needs of the family were met completely. However, as could be said of any group of over 100 families, there were wide variations in competence in household and money management. We found ourselves talking to both thrifty and thriftless people, and most of them are somewhere in between. Some are especially worried about the effects of low income on their children. Clothing, especially for growing children, is a big problem. That trapped feeling, where there seems to be no way to get free or to get ahead, was expressed vividly.

Here is what some said about the effects on the children:

- Of all her problems as a widow, she believes that the financial problem is by far the most serious. She would often like to be able to buy something that would cheer her up a bit and she would also like to buy some clothes for her daughter who is reaching the age where clothing is important.
- She is finding it hard to manage financially. She showed a letter that she had just received from the school about an out-of-town trip for grade eight pupils. The trip would cost \$14 -- a very large amount in her budget.
- Another person with a very large family, probably has little knowledge of money management. She pays \$25 a month into a clothing account at a store where she knows that she does not get good value, but it's the only place where she can get credit. She does not sew. She once had a sewing machine which she sold. She runs out of money for food each month.

The following comment in one interview would be true of several interviews, especially in large families:

- In spite of her complaints about the amount of public assistance, she said that the workers are wonderful and she has had no difficulty in getting along with them. To the best of their ability they have helped her with clothing and with furniture.

An example of careful planning on the part of public welfare and its beneficiaries was provided in at least one home.

- When this young woman first applied for assistance, plans were made for her to stay home for two years while the four children are young. In addition to rent, the allowance is \$165 a month. Every three months she receives \$99 for clothing, and this goes a long way because she sews well and makes good clothes out of remnants and clothes passed on from an older to a younger boy. When she buys shoes and any ready-made garments she makes sure of good quality.

It is a serious business when families feel there is no way to get ahead, and especially when doors that seem to be opening are slammed shut. People said:

- The worst problem about their income is that they cannot have any sense of getting ahead. It's very demoralizing when an increase in the rate of assistance is counterbalanced immediately by a change in rent or in some supplementary form of assistance.
- If and when the rate of family allowance is raised, the same sort of thing will happen.

- It would be good if a person on public welfare could save a little money and get some feeling of being a little ahead or of building up a little reserve for emergencies. People feel anxious about emergencies that they may not be able to handle.

Recipients of social assistance, if one may judge by the people interviewed, feel that they are often in the dark about the rates and regulations. Even those who were making the best of their circumstances and who displayed no hostility to the bureaucracy, still said they were unclear about the rates of assistance and had incomplete knowledge of regulations. One such person said that her assistance had recently increased by \$25 a month with no explanation. Other people were antagonistic and obviously in conflict with representatives of welfare departments. One person complained about the worker whom she finds harsh, but equally serious was the fact that she does not know what amount of assistance she can expect. She would like to know definitely how much rent she would be allowed. The worker says that she does know and accuses her of not telling the truth.

In some parts of the country, social assistance departments are preparing booklets designed to provide full information to recipients. It is a difficult effort and it will need to be sustained indefinitely in order to keep information up to date. It may not entirely overcome the feeling of being in the dark. In a world filled with the clamour of communications media, people never seem to feel they are fully and honestly informed. It is part of today's sense of powerlessness. It should also be emphasized that no written document can take the place of free conversation between a staff member and a recipient, with opportunities on both sides to question and to explain.

We believe it is serious that so many people feel degraded by the physical conditions in some of the public assistance offices, to which they are exposed during long waits for attention. Here is what some said:

- She and the children received public assistance for six months. She went twice a week to the department and had to wait half-a-day each time. There was always a room full of people waiting and one clerk responsible for the desk.

- Her experience with public welfare was that the workers were considerate, although sometimes some of them seemed to have the impression that it was their money that she was using. There were long waits under unpleasant conditions. One morning, resolved to be first in line, she got to the department at 8:25 only to find that there were a dozen people ahead of her. She said that on cheque days conditions were bad, as the place was full of half-drunk people. At the same time there was a great mixture of people. Some of the women appeared well dressed while teenagers came to pick up cheques for themselves; this was always criticized by older recipients.

- One of the men who was interviewed had recently consented to accompany and help another person who was applying for assistance. While they were in the department, with its crowding applicants and harassed staff, he found himself thinking, "my God I hope I never have to apply for this".

It should be re-emphasized that such physical conditions do not obtain in all public assistance offices. Nevertheless, all of them are affected by the firm Canadian conviction that life on public welfare should be less desirable than other lifestyles. It is suggested that some public welfare departments would be justified in calling upon their governing bodies to inaugurate studies of and changes in the processing of applications.

In spite of the Canada Assistance Plan and the various related provincial programs, there still seem to be variations in practices among the municipalities. Some families had received vouchers for food instead of cash in their previous places of residence in smaller communities, and they said that their children especially resented the use of vouchers. One mother had moved with her children from a very small town to a metropolitan city. In the small town, public welfare was a nightmare to her, both in the amount of assistance and in the suspicious attitudes of the welfare workers. In the

city, the latter were altogether helpful, making sensible arrangements suited to the needs of her family. Delays in payments, sometimes caused by breakdown in procedures, caused not only temporary financial strain, but also a strong feeling of insecurity in women with sole responsibility for their families. One of them said that there were many delays in payments and that last Easter they didn't have any food in the house. She has encountered delays frequently in payment for medicine.

In general, people appreciate the fact that many of their health requirements are met as a part of social assistance. Criticisms of the arrangements for health protection, where they were expressed, were first about procedures in some departments and second about incomplete coverage. In some areas, mothers said that when they were given prescriptions they had to go to their welfare department for a card, and this procedure created unnecessary difficulty for women with several children. Dental care is only partially covered.

In general, what did people say about the way they were treated as recipients of social assistance?

- This sole parent was on public welfare for two years. It was a difficult period. The first time she went to apply they asked why her parents couldn't look after her. Then they kept changing workers. During the two years she was on public welfare she had four different workers. Finally, the fourth worker came to the house one day and said that she was cut off with one month's notice. She felt there was discrimination in the way people were treated and she never understood why some people had their applications attended to so quickly and so favourably and how they received as much as they did. Nevertheless, it was through the public welfare department that she went to school in an attempt to upgrade her education. She is now employed.

- A businesswoman who has always been mainly self-supporting and now is entirely so, gave some impressions based on a limited contact with a welfare department. It was shortly after her separation that, on the advice of a friend who knew the welfare system, she applied to get her medical and dental bills looked after.

On the basis of a means test she did in fact secure protection for doctors' and dentists' bills, hospital and optical care, for two years. This was a great relief from worry about what would happen to her if there were any serious breakdown in health. The department staff members were quite civil, but nevertheless she had an unpleasant sense of dependency and she disliked intensely the business of making arrangements for help through the department. She said "you get hurt easily when you are dependent".

- A widow who has received provincial allowances for years said that the social worker has been in touch with the family for some time. They look upon her as a friend. When the widow first applied for assistance, many people warned her that she would be exposed to very unpleasant supervision. She has not found this to be the case. For example, through her credit union connection she was able to buy a small TV with nothing but approval from the department worker.

Some of the people interviewed were observant and shrewd about the working conditions of welfare department staff. Several people mentioned the fact that the workers change frequently. One person said that all of the workers had been courteous and as helpful as they could be, but her impression was that they stay with the department only a short time. She just begins to feel that she can communicate when the worker leaves. Another said the staff is so overworked that when she needs to ask for any special attention she feels as if she must be the only one on welfare who is a nuisance. She expressed the hope that this Inquiry would help not only recipients but also welfare departments.

Some Practical Suggestions

Some of the women had comments or suggestions about programs or services that would help them.

One person who is both a community college student and a sole parent of several lively children said it is her main impression that it is extremely hard to get off social assistance. There are very few services or resources to "pull you out".

A car is regarded as practically a necessity in two-parent families. In a one-parent family it is a godsend, but one which few possess. We were told that a practical service would be one that supplied volunteer drivers to see that women without cars got to shopping centres where the best values are obtainable. One woman with several children said that she could not stretch her dollars as far as she does if a relative did not drive her on monthly shopping trips.

What can be done by a mother alone, on welfare, when household appliances wear out? One said that it would cost \$35 to fix her refrigerator. Sometimes there are roof repairs and even small repairs such as leaking faucets. Something should be set up, she thought, perhaps through a core of volunteers, to help women who are faced with such problems. Another woman tackled the equipment problem with great determination. After the separation an immediate practical problem arose about repairs of household equipment which she could not afford to pay for. She began to figure out the equipment herself. She studied appliances until she was able to locate the difficulty and repair them herself. She thinks that a night course in repairs would be an excellent idea for any woman who is a sole parent.

Several women mentioned that some government pamphlets on child guidance and on food management are excellent and should be distributed widely to people on social assistance programs.

Some said that provincial programs should include more help with money management and that those who could help most are women who have learned by their own experience how to buy and how to make the best use of food and other household supplies.

Some said that they would like to see more developments of children's clothing exchanges. A great deal of children's clothing is going to waste because children outgrow garments which could be useful if more exchange facilities were planned.

There was a feeling that people who have had the experience of social assistance could be more help to others who are going through a similar experience. One woman said she gets the impression that everybody in the community is ready to help people in difficulty, but the welfare recipient never has a chance to help or to be of service.

Do welfare recipients feel as if they are stigmatized in their communities? They do indeed.

- There were a few exceptions -- for example, the mother who said she had no feeling of its being a stigma to be on a provincial allowance and that it was wholly satisfactory to her because it seems so secure.

- Another woman reflected the feelings and opinions of a much larger number when she said that she feels the disapproval of her community directed against people on welfare, against mothers who are sole parents and against large families. She is sure that people try to take financial advantage of mothers who are alone with the children. She summed it up by saying "now I know how Negroes feel".

- Another mother of several children described all the ways in which she tries to keep up a good appearance and to teach her children to be responsible citizens. Then, indignantly, she added that she intended to write a letter to the provincial cabinet minister who is responsible for public welfare, to point out to him the pride that social assistance mothers should be able to feel in their families and to say that his public comments about welfare recipients are undermining their pride, self-respect and confidence.

Employment

The 10 men who were interviewed as sole parents were, with one exception, self-supporting and with neither experience nor expectation of public welfare. Two of them, however, had been unemployed recently.

- The first of these two men was normally employed in a seasonal trade and had no doubt that he would soon be busy again. In the meantime, he was drawing \$58 a week unemployment insurance. His own family problems had probably made him sensitive to the troubles of other families and he commented that much larger families must be living on the amount that he is drawing since unemployment insurance is not related to family responsibility.

- The second of the two men had had a much rougher time as a sole parent. As if his family situation were not enough bad luck, more trouble came in the form of a layoff. An old injury flared up and immobilized him for over a month. His plant was laying off men anyway and he was among them. He could not get compensation because the condition had nothing to do with the job, and he could not get unemployment insurance because he could not look for work. He knew that he should be eligible for social assistance and he did go to the welfare department one day, took one look at the place and decided to borrow money. He borrowed a little and earned a little on repair work. Later, he got a job but not at his trade, and the clothing that he needed to buy for it cost him more than he could afford. He hoped that the summer months would bring him opportunities in the work for which he is trained. In the meantime, he continued to worry about the children, their health and guidance.

The men made two points about the position of workers who are male sole parents. Their family responsibilities curtail their freedom to look for work, at least to some extent. Second, they cannot moonlight as many men are able to do because their presence in the home may be essential after normal working hours.

The women who were interviewed were not affected by unemployment. Out of 103 women, 28 were working full time and several others had part-time work. This is a fair enough reflection of the picture at large, because the 2½ million Canadian women who are working for pay constitute a third of the female population old enough to work.

We wanted to know how people felt about their jobs and what features of a job appear to be most important from the standpoint of a woman who is a sole parent as well as a member of the labour force.

- This woman, with two teenage children, earns about \$3,500 as a clerk in a very large firm. She does not like her work. "It is just a job". She wants a promotion but feels the supervisor is against her. She feels that being a deserted wife prevents her from getting ahead. "When you apply for a job, they ask you about your husband and when you say he has deserted you, the employer has all sorts of doubts". She decided to say that her husband is dead but even then people ask all sorts of questions.

- Compared with some other families, this third home, with a mother and three teenaged children, is comparatively well off, with an income of about \$7,000 a year which includes about \$100 a week earned by the mother. The mother described some of her feelings vividly and sometimes humorously. Her life changed in several important ways after the separation. During the marriage she was employed and they had an excellent babysitter. After the separation this arrangement was impossible and she had a series of babysitters who were unsatisfactory. Finally, she moved near her mother in order to have her child looked after. She says there have been many times when she was ready to "give up and go on welfare". She now thinks that it might have been better if she had done so long ago. She believes that the unsatisfactory babysitters had a bad effect on the youngest child. She does clerical work with considerable responsibility and has been in her present position for several years. She says that she prefers to work and has always felt that way. However, she has been feeling lately that she would like a change of jobs because her work seems monotonous. She has a hankering to live in another city. If she were single she could risk changing jobs but under her circumstances she feels she cannot take this kind of risk. She resents the fact that her ex-husband is still able to move around as he likes. She catches herself resenting the tie of her children.

We encountered several who appeared to themselves and to us as born business women.

- This person, who is doing well in her office and whose teenaged children are also doing well, said that she simply likes working. She would rather be employed than working full time at housekeeping. If there were two parents in the home she would still like to work, at least part time. She has very little liking for the society of full-time housewives because in her experience they do nothing but gossip about their husbands and their friends and talk about their children.

- One young woman with a child holds an office job at \$340 a month and her husband contributes. She says that she is not badly off but she would like to begin saving some money and this she cannot do at present. She feels she has a great deal of job security and fringe benefits that are valuable to her. The people with whom she works understand her situation. A couple of times when her child was sick she took time off and found that people in her office were sympathetic and willing to be flexible about her time as long as she gets her work done.

Among the women interviewed, a few were comparatively mature women who have been widowed for years. Two of them worked for wages and their attitudes and experiences are worth describing:

- When she became a widow, this woman sought employment immediately. She had a friend among the members of a religious community and this is how she got her job. The children were looked after by family members and she and her children are boarding with one of her older married children, sharing the housework. She wishes she could have a home of her own but feels that she cannot afford it with her present income. She took a course as a RNA and finds her work very rewarding. She has a keen interest in the old people she cares for. "They say I spoil them", said she, "Maybe it is true, but how can I refuse to curl their hair or put a ribbon on when it makes them so happy?" This comment expresses her warm feeling toward her family and people in general.

- The story of another widow has a rural area as its background. This woman and her husband were farming. They were young, with two children scarcely more than infants, when the young man died suddenly. The young widow first sold the farm and bought the house in which the family have lived ever since. It is in a small rural community. She decided that she must find some way of earning a living and that it would be best to try to find work that she could do at home. She did laundry for some time and she took some girl boarders. She also did a little babysitting. She did well financially by taking boarders because she had a garden and could prepare good meals inexpensively. During that period she was able to stay at home with the children. For the last five years, since the children have been older, she has been able to work away from home. At first she was able to get positions close to her home so that she could walk to and from work. Her next job was some miles away, and seasonal. A year ago she was offered work in a store. This work is steady and she enjoys it. She can not only walk to work but she can get home at noon to look after the children's noon meal. She speaks appreciatively of her various employers. She said that when she was left a widow she had no training to fall back on. She says that in many places of employment they would not have bothered to instruct anyone, but in these firms they did so,

and she has learned a great deal not only about the work for which she was employed but also about clerical work that is necessary in most jobs. In all of these places of employment she knew something about the employers and they knew her prior to her taking employment. She has never had any public assistance. She could, of course, have applied for provincial assistance but the idea of doing so was distasteful to one who has been reared in independence and always valued independence greatly. She also felt that she would be happier, or less apt to become depressed about her widowhood, if she were very active. In the days when she took boarders the girls provided company for her and this was also an advantage so soon after her bereavement.

Several women were working part time, supplementing provincial assistance. One of them does a little housework and with the money she earns she is buying a washer and dryer. At one time she worked part time in a large retail store but found that it did not pay because of the kind of clothing she needed. When she does housework, clothing is no problem. Another who is raising four children on \$315 a month works 10 hours a week, earning \$1.75 an hour. She pays a babysitter 50 cents an hour and she also has transportation expenses. She feels strongly that mothers should be free from deductions from their provincial allowance for an amount equal to what they pay a babysitter. She likes her work but she considers the children are still too young for her to take a full-time job. Other women are babysitters, either occasionally or regularly. They say they want to earn a little extra money but they like having something to do that is useful to other people.

Wage Rates - Taxes

The interviews reflect the comparatively low wage scales of women workers.

- One girl said that when she assumed her present position on the basis of a promotion she had to be pretty direct and mature in ascertaining whether they would pay her as much as they would pay a man. Her firm is not unionized.

- We spoke with two young women in clerical positions in a community with low wage levels. One earned \$65 a week from which are deducted unemployment insurance, Canada Pension Plan payments and income tax, with her ex-husband paying hospitalization. Both these young women agreed that there are two major problems of being a sole parent. The first is financial. They illustrated this by saying that you have to save up even to go to a movie, and then if it happens to be a poor one you feel as if you have wasted money that you couldn't afford in the first place. They both suspected that they would be better off financially to stop working and accept social assistance. The second big problem has something to do with the stigma they feel is attached to being separated women. Presumably they would feel the stigma much more strongly if they were on some sort of public assistance program.

- A mother with one child, who is in a professional position, earns about \$6,600 a year. She commented that her income does not make her eligible for a CMHC house. She feels that her present situation severely limits any long-term planning. She believes that the long-term prospect is frightening to women who are in the \$3,000 to \$4,000-a-year income bracket. She described in some detail another woman who is in her own income bracket -- that is, around \$6,000 to \$7,000 a year -- but who has five children to support. This woman and her family need more space than they have and they are severely restricted as to recreation and other amenities of life.

We saw some evidence of the well-known fact that nowadays there are fewer people who are working on a straight 9 to 5 schedule and more people on shift work.

- One young woman works in a hospital from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. She is fortunate to have found a day care centre with flexible hours. Another centre in the community did not suit her as to hours and was too expensive.

- Another mother with two children has been employed for 13 years in a large plant. Her shift is from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. The problem of child care has been difficult. For some time she had a series of irresponsible babysitters. Recently she placed her child in a children's residential centre, except for the weekends when he comes home to her. She pays \$30 a month and is extremely pleased with this care. She gets away from the former problem of having strangers living in. Because of her night shift it was necessary for the babysitter to be in the apartment at night and also in the daytime when she has to get her sleep. She says that the little boy has improved even in the short time he has been in the residence.

- Only one woman was trying to make a success of her own business. Her parents had urged her to try because she would be independent. She took all the money that she obtained from her husband's estate and put it into a business. She pays monthly rent, heat, hydro and telephone and is at present taking in about \$400 a month. She is working alone. She is hopeful; she says the district is a very good one and she will build up the business gradually.

There was great indignation about taxes among the people interviewed. Income tax regulations were called indefensible. We were asked why there had been no new regulations about income tax deductions or child care, or a revised schedule of deductions for children. One woman pays income tax of \$1,300 a year and is paying on the amount she receives for child support, which is not deducted at source. The \$100 a month she pays to the housekeeper has not been deductible. Another person pays a housekeeper \$22 a week. The housekeeper would resist showing her wages in her employer's income tax declaration, which would mean that the housekeeper herself would be paying more taxes. One person who argued that the cost of day care of children should be deductible also emphasized that the family allowance or some other system should subsidize sole-support mothers who are earning in order to bring their total income up to a reasonable level, whatever that might be.

Work and Public Welfare

Some of the women seem to make efforts to move from dependence to independence, but sometimes further confused their already complicated circumstances.

- With three children in public school and an income of \$180 a month this person said that she had been finding it impossible to manage and has borrowed, getting deeper and deeper in debt.

Therefore, she took a job in a factory where she was paid \$1.25 an hour. She had to pay a babysitter \$15 a week so that she was clearing \$72 every two weeks. Her rent in subsidized housing went up from \$33 to \$50 because she was working. She could not deduct anything for a babysitter. Obviously this plan wasn't working. She then tried working on a night shift from 4 to 11 p.m., clearing \$10 a week. Her babysitter was clearing more. She gave up the work at the end of a couple of weeks. She thinks that when a woman in her position takes a job people like the provincial welfare department and the housing authority should allow six months or so to work without having the allowance reduced and the rent raised. This would give the person a chance to replenish clothing and pay off debts. She says that she also went to a Canada Manpower training program, to upgrade her schooling and also to business college. Canada Manpower paid \$62 a week. Her rent was raised and her provincial allowance cut. She concluded that life as a stenographer would be expensive, with respect to clothes, babysitting, etc., and yet she seems to feel a great need to get a feeling that she is improving her situation even slightly.

Of course there were examples of ineffectual efforts to be independent. One situation was typical of several.

- This woman, very poor, now with six children, took a job on shifts of 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5 to 8 p.m. At that time she left the children with her neighbour. The arrangement broke down and she got a young girl to babysit, but this did not work out at all well. She gave up the effort to work because she could not get a reliable babysitter. She and the children are now entirely supported by social assistance.

2. Training and Education

Because this Inquiry is strictly a "now" project we did not probe into the early education of our informants. We know that their education varied all the way from illiteracy to university degrees. What we could see clearly, however, were all the efforts that people were making to better themselves through training. Some of these efforts were small, some huge, but all of them were impressive in view of the circumstances in which parents were living and striving to get ahead.

- Here, for example, is a girl with four lively children. She worked in an office before her marriage and she is now going to a community college two nights a week, studying shorthand. She pays for this course herself and a neighbour babysits. "If you are determined you can do anything", she said.

- Another girl with less confidence in herself is living on about \$330 a month for herself and two children, part of which she earns by looking after children. She had no training before marriage but she thinks that she would like to be employed and is trying to prepare herself by going two nights a week to a bookkeeping and typing course. She has finished the first level of bookkeeping; the typing is a three-year course. She may be able to look for work next fall.

- Then there is the mother of four school-age children who is far along in a chartered accountant's course. She has finished three years and has two more years of study. She spends 20 hours a week studying outside her work.

- With another girl, the road to training was full of frustration. Perhaps obstacles were put in her way because she belongs to a racial minority. She states that she was not well received when she applied for a training allowance and she noticed that other girls met with a much better reception and got a better deal. She wanted badly to get into a nurses' training course but there were said to be no openings in the two-year course and she entered the course for practical nurses. She would still like to get into a course that would lead to an RN. She asked why there could not be supplementary assistance while a person works: it would make all the difference between staying in work and giving up work in utter discouragement and falling back on total social assistance. Moreover, she is convinced that society must find new careers for people. She knows a number of new university graduates who are unable to find jobs. The community needs money for training personnel for fields that are now undermanned or not manned at all. Another possibility, of course, would be a three-day work week which she thinks may be coming.

- This parent is involved in a long program. She works one evening a week as a waitress. She has been attending adult classes for the last two years and, at present, is repeating Grade 11. She hopes to take further courses in the fall and to train as a secretary. She found it very hard to go back to school and attend classes regularly, to concentrate on homework and to write essays. It tired her, but she came through and she feels very proud of her accomplishments. She felt she needed this education to move ahead in life, get off welfare and get a well-paid job to provide adequately for her children.

- The next young woman, a widow, started a refresher course at a local community college. She now knows that this was too soon after the shock of her husband's death. At that time all she wanted was "to be on the go all the time". Actually she was too restless and upset to take much in. This was a Manpower Training Project on which she received \$82 per week, and she points out that this is more than a girl would make in an office in her community. She said that she was "scared to think of how she would manage when she actually takes work".

- What will happen in another situation we cannot forecast. This woman, who is divorced, completed Grade 13 with the aim of continuing her education in college. Her reasoning is that, if she is to have any chance to support five growing children, she will need more than she would earn with a Grade 13 education. She could arrange to pay for her studies through bursaries and loans and, as all her children are in school, she would have no babysitting problem. The difficulty is that provincial policy does not allow sponsorship of recipients of social assistance beyond Grade 13. She was continuing to receive social assistance pending a decision on her further education by a Provincial Board of Review. This example illustrates the unresolved question of how far public social services should assist in the education of recipients to prepare them for economic independence.

- There seemed to be grounds for uneasiness also in connection with a woman who has been alone for four years with her five children. There was a period when she was dangerously depressed, until her plans for further training gave her a new start and a much more hopeful attitude. She had had some commercial training before her marriage. Last year through a Canada Manpower program she finished Grade 10 with marks of about 80 per cent in her examinations. She used to go to bed at eight o'clock with the children and get up at 4.30 a.m. to study. At the time of our conversation with her she had applied for admission to a community college but the application had not yet been accepted. This was an anxious period for her. She was worried about obtaining a student grant which would cover tuition, books and busfare. Later in the summer, we heard that she was accepted as a student at the college and her application for a loan approved. Her aims have been sound because she knows what a dreary future she faces unless she can get on a better financial footing.

There were reports of disappointments. For example, there was a person who entered a course through Canada Manpower that she still believes was good but the course was in a line of work in which women can't get jobs, or if a woman ever does get a job it is because the employer wants to pay less than he would be obliged to pay a man. There were examples of people who believe that

they need to brush up on their skills but the regulations about training grants won't allow it. Some of them felt as if they were too employable to fit into the regulations. There was a young woman who took a keypunch course under a program paying her \$75 per week, but when the course was finished there were no openings and in fact some of the prospective employers said that the keypunch course should have been much longer. Anyway, she added, everybody wants people with experience.

- The mother of two children, who looks far older than her years, is living on public assistance and in squalor. An attempt was made to get her into a welding course but she could not pass the test. When we met her she was taking a hairdresser's course, and was in the third week of an eight-month course. She was finding the work hard and she was slow at it. She did not feel she had learned much. The instructors were not very nice to her. Public welfare was paying for the course and for a babysitter. She was not happy about the course and felt she had been pushed into it by the welfare workers, no doubt as part of a program to encourage welfare recipients to work. This made her feel guilty because she is strong enough to work but she felt resentful, too. She felt that she was working a full day from 9 to 5 and getting nothing out of it but training of doubtful value. The proprietor is making money but she is not. She would much rather stay at home and look after the children. She missed most of her oldest girl's childhood and now is missing that of the second child. She worries about the baby when she is at work, especially if she left her crying. To an observer, this whole plan, for this particular person, looks like nonsense. If society cared as much as it claims to care about home life, the community effort should be spent on helping this woman become an adequate homemaker instead of an inadequate hairdresser.

There are many women that are feeling that the best years of their lives are being wasted.

- Here is one of them in her twenties, divorced with one child. She is a reasonably intelligent, sensible person but gives the impression of a discouraged young woman, sitting around her apartment, her sole pleasures being the TV and an occasional cigarette -- and even this she feels she cannot afford. She says that her big problem is money. Other women who are more resourceful and energetic might ask impatiently why she doesn't bestir herself. People are not all self-starters. Life can be so narrow that it lacks stimulation. It is unfortunate that the social workers in the public welfare office do not have the time, and there are not enough of them, to provide that

extra component of service that would probably make quite a difference to this mother and child. For example, if a re-training plan were developed for her and a child development plan for the little one, the picture might be quite different in a year or two.

Canadian society has succeeded in convincing itself that it cares profoundly about the welfare of children. It has firm ideas about the children of mothers working for pay, although not about the children of mothers overworking for nothing. Therefore, it is important to hear what the mothers have to say about this much discussed topic of the working mother. It is also important to read between the lines and to comprehend the constant effort and self-discipline that are part of these lives.

- Andrea's arrangements for the three children are satisfactory to her. The little girl is at school until 4 p.m., and then goes to a neighbour until the mother picks her up. Andrea reciprocates by babysitting for this neighbour constantly. The two youngest are in family day care. They like the place and look upon the foster day care mother as a granny. These arrangements can only be maintained through good organization. They all get up at 7 a.m. While the children have breakfast, Andrea gets dressed for work. The children then brush their teeth, get dressed for the outdoors and they are all away in the car by 8 a.m. Andrea doesn't have breakfast. She has coffee when she gets to the office.

- This person thinks that the attitude of her older children towards her college attendance is interesting. They were intrigued and curious at first, but she thinks that they find it stimulating and enjoy a bit of competition in telling her what they are learning. She thinks, however, that there is public disapproval of the type of program she has adopted for herself and her family. She thinks that in our society almost all women have a feeling that they are actually obliged to be in the home, if not every minute of the day, then most of the time. She has encountered this attitude among social workers, one of whom told her that her program of education constituted a shirking of her responsibilities as a mother. She resents these attitudes but appears not to be swayed by them.

- Nancy takes her child to a day care centre downtown. They leave home at 7 a.m. The little boy is left at the day care center at 7:30 and Nancy clocks in at 8 a.m. at her office. They are back home by 5:20 p.m. It is a long day for the little fellow and he is usually in bed at 7 or 7:30 p.m. Nancy has a car. It would be different for a mother who did not have a car. Many mothers travel by bus with their children and this is time-consuming, fatiguing and expensive.

- One mother reflected the feelings of several in expressing concern that she simply has not enough time for teaching and developing her child. She spends 50 minutes commuting each day and naturally the child has to have enough sleep, so this important aspect of child development is neglected.

- In another home, the mother explained that an important feature of the home life is that the children all have their household duties: they look after their own rooms, prepare their own breakfasts and their own lunches. This is an advantage. The mother feels sure that her children have less time to be bored than others without such responsibilities.

Many women are easily brainwashed by the superficial assumptions of society at large. There were women in distress about their children in trouble. They believed the trouble would not have happened if they had not gone out to work. And this in spite of histories of family violence, or poverty, or both, which would fully account for disturbance in the children. Other women are ambivalent, such as the young widow who is firmly convinced that no mother of small children should take employment, and yet she is so anxious to be independent that she is planning to work. These women are compounding their problems by their feeling of guilt about gainful employment. Sheila Kieran, in The Working Wife,¹³ says that "we mix our guilt about being away from our children with our guilt about marriage breakup and are often irresistibly tempted to make it all up to our children by being over-protective on the one hand or by refusing to set reasonable and consistent limits for them on the other".

3. Housing

To prepare a section of any report on the subject of housing is a maddening problem, because everything that could be said seems already to have been said in many ways and in many places. All that parents said to us about housing in the course of this Inquiry has been repeated time and again.

All that the inquirers observed has been observed and reported many times over. No attempt will be made to convey everything that was said or seen because people wanted to talk about the problem of getting a roof over their heads and what they said would have filled books. Here are examples only.

We saw rural slum conditions.

- A mother and one teenage child were living in a little shack a few miles from town. She has four rooms and there is electricity but no running water. The privy is outside.

- A mother and six children, three of them of school age, moved into their present house when the mother bought the place for \$100 down and \$91 a month. There are two bedrooms upstairs which the children use and the mother has made a bedroom for herself in part of the small living room. There is a bathroom but the house was unoccupied all winter and there was damage from frost. The hot water tank and toilet will have to be fixed. There is no furnace; the only heat is from a small oil stove. There are no storm windows. The electrical system is poor because heavy-duty wiring is lacking. The mother cooks on an electric stove with two burners and is always blowing fuses. She says that this house is no worse than the house she lived in while she was still with her husband. In fact, it is actually better because this one has some sort of indoor plumbing.

- A girl of 21, left by desertion with two small children, occupies a small shack reached by a long lane off a sideroad. Inside, she has made the place attractive and spotlessly clean. It is heated by a space heater. There is adequate wiring, an electric stove with four burners, and there is indoor plumbing. There are two serious problems in winter: it is impossible to keep the place heated and the long lane to the sideroad is usually impassable.

Granted that conditions in the country are sometimes primitive, what about the big and presumably wealthy cities?

- A mother and three teenage children occupy a house on a street of dilapidated houses and small, shabby industrial concerns. The district is hilly and the street overlooks an area of railway tracks and large industries. Had it not been for some smoke coming out of the chimney it would have been hard to believe that this house was occupied, because it presents such an appearance of neglect and poverty. The other houses on the street are not much better, but perhaps marginally so. This family has lived in the house for two years. There are eight rooms including a bathroom in which, according to the mother, the plumbing works all right. The floors throughout the place are terrible. There is

a wood furnace and the children rustle the wood from empty lots and perhaps from industries. This seems to be a neighbourhood activity.

- In another city, a ramshackle building contains a large number of apartments. This particular apartment houses a mother and two small children. It is very dirty. The walls are filthy and broken and the whole place is chaotic, with garments and bedclothes heaped on the floor and dishes scattered on a table. There are no cupboards or closets and the kitchen is so small that it could almost be called a cupboard. Asked if she liked this place, the mother said it was not too bad. She had a desperate time finding any accommodation over a period of two years. She once asked her public welfare worker about the chances of getting into public housing and was told it would take years. She never asked again. The rent for this place, including heat, is \$100 a month. The public welfare office pays \$92 and the mother takes the remaining \$8 out of the \$104 that she receives for food and other expenses.

We were particularly impressed by the statements of several young women, each with only one child or at most two children. As a general rule, housing authorities assign the highest priority to the largest families and these small families were excluded from subsidized housing. If they kept their rent within their budget, they were likely to be living in substandard accommodation, inconveniently located. If they were employed, and especially if they were without cars, there was the practical problem of finding time for the endless search for decent accommodation. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, car drivers could be among the most useful volunteers in large modern cities, where a family with small children, without a car, is badly handicapped in every phase of family life.

- One person, employed, and with one child, considers herself personally lucky about housing. After a great deal of trouble when she moved six times in 10 months from one frightful place to another, she got an apartment in an old house at \$105 a month. She has a bathroom and, she added, a bathroom is a real status symbol for one-parent families. She is in a position to hear about the circumstances in which sole-support parents are living and she is convinced, on good evidence, that housing in general is completely inadequate.

Young women are paying \$90 a month for wretched slum housing that does not have laundry facilities and is, frequently, verminous. This kind of housing is disappearing in the core areas of cities, because dwellings are being demolished and commercial establishments built. Landlords, therefore, are able to put still more pressure on poor people because of the increasing scarcity of low-cost housing.

Nearly 16 per cent of the families we saw were living in subsidized public housing in large or medium-sized cities. Some of their statements are reported here to indicate the advantages and disadvantages of public housing as seen by the tenants:

- A mother and her small boy live in a low-rental housing development in a poor neighbourhood. Before she secured this place, the mother had a dreadful time about housing. She had lived in basement suites that were damp, paying \$85 for two appalling rooms. She had her name on the public housing list for two years before she got this place. She pays \$45 and has a living room and kitchen combined, with a good bathroom and lots of hot water. There are laundry facilities downstairs which she can use any time she wishes. The only problem is that the children lack play space, though the tenants are working on this problem through the Tenants' Association. A Recreation Committee, on which she has served, has arranged some parties for the children. The nearest day care centre is some distance away and they would like service of this kind in the housing development. She is not nearly as lonely as she was before she moved into this apartment.

- A woman with six children has been in a large public housing development for a year. She had to wait four years from the date of her first application. The mother said that she simply loves it. The only problem is in the disorderly behaviour of children and young people who are out all night in the courts between the buildings and who are not always residents of the housing development. For this reason, the mother thinks the housing development is probably not a very desirable place for children and young people. She does not mingle much with other neighbours. She has her friends outside. She is not interested in the Tenants' Association because she says it never accomplishes anything. The housing authorities are very good about providing materials needed by tenants for the improvement of their apartments, she says, but if a woman is alone it is hard for her to make the best use of paint and other material.

- Another family has a five-bedroom apartment in a public housing area. This mother with five children worked very hard to get subsidized housing, and to hasten the acceptance of her application she went to a Member of Parliament. She is convinced that the manager of the housing development has held this action against her. She is very resentful toward the manager. When she went to see him about her application prior to her appeal to the MP, he told her that "I've got a list of you single women as long as my arm". He said, "I'm not allowed to put many of you single women in here". She deeply resented these remarks as a widow trying to raise a large family. There were other parents who, rightly or wrongly, felt that the managers of public housing developments were themselves among the many people who looked down upon users of subsidized housing.

Comments about Tenants' Associations were generally, although not invariably, negative. Some people said that they had tried to attend meetings which had ended in a farce because nobody would agree with anybody else. Efforts to organize the children in various ways were reported, with the complaint that parents didn't show up to do the necessary work. Then, if only one child was picked for any special office or duties, other parents would become jealous. Some of the mothers said that they were simply scared that they might be put out if they got connected with the Tenants' Association. They said that the authorities would not put you out for this reason but they would find some other reason if you associated yourself with this group.

There were people who badly wanted to get into public housing and were failing to do so. There were also people badly in need of better housing who claimed that under no circumstances would they consent to move into public housing. They said "I'd rather be on the street" or "not if they gave me a million dollars" or "those places are full of drunks and young punks".

The stigma that is so often attached to public housing has been a matter of general concern. E.D. Huttman¹⁴ says "that the early simplified assumption that provision of decent physical housing would automatically decrease mental stress and behavioural problems for poverty families has recently been challenged."

Public housing may intensify mental stress for users because of the undesirable environment caused by housing management policies, characteristics of other users and socially undesirable aspects of the housing design itself. Dr. Huttman adds that stress may be intensified because the use of public housing means a negative label for the user, thanks to the bad reputation of the program, and this label in turn affects the user's relation with others such as his employers. Richard M. Titmuss¹⁵ puts this problem in public housing in the context of the whole society when he claims that to provide social services in such a way as to avoid stigma is one of the major challenges facing the social welfare workers today.

Parents said to us that public housing is not keeping up with the volume of need. Some said that a more spacious concept of housing is needed that will take into account not only bed, bath and board, but also people's need for recreation, education and privacy. They said there needs to be a mix of people in housing developments around the community centre. The community centre should incorporate a coordinated system of social services, particularly day care of children. They cannot see why federal money cannot be used in this way.

The statement of the Canadian Council on Social Development, Social Policies for Canada, Part I,¹⁶ makes six recommendations on housing. It presses for the provision of adequate housing through public planning and action as well as through the market. It emphasizes that Canada will continue to need a stock of housing subsidized in relation to the income of users. It urges that housing funds and programs should no longer be "subject to manipulation for fiscal reasons to an extent quite inappropriate for such a fundamental human requirement. One cannot imagine hospital services or old age security being turned on and off like a tap because of year-to-year economic conditions". The role of government and the appropriate roles of each level of government are in crucial need of clarification.

4. Family Courts and Legal Aid

During the interviews with parents, the following statements were typical of many comments about family courts and legal aid:

- The family court is very unsatisfactory. This woman's application for help in obtaining support came to nothing. The court is so understaffed that it is a bad joke in this community.
- She went through the family court in trying to get support from her husband. The court found her husband but she got no support. However, she found the interviews with the probation officer extremely helpful, particularly his work in preparing her for appearance in court.
- This woman encountered some of the special problems of obtaining information, let alone service, in rural districts. She is supposed to receive \$65 a month alimony to be paid directly to her. Her ex-husband defaulted on the payments and she went to court again. She was advised to go to the Justice of the Peace to get an affidavit stating that there was default, but the Justice of the Peace had no previous experience in this kind of situation. She says she went on a wild goose chase to try to get information about the procedures, and finally she went back to the Justice of the Peace and he wrote a letter to serve as an affidavit. She had to wait until she got \$3.00 to send to the County capital to get proof of her divorce decree. She then sent the affidavit and the decree to the city where her ex-husband was located. She emphasized how disturbing it is that women should get this kind of runaround at a time when they are in distress anyway, and when they may be having a hard time keeping any sense of self-respect. There is no central source of reliable information about procedures and resources. Because of the lack of coordination among agencies and departments, each individual must hunt around looking for the right procedures and social resources.

The comments of the women, reinforced by comments of community leaders create a vivid impression of family courts that are overwhelmed by the pressure of applications from people who are in desperate situations, frantically trying to find solutions for problems that cannot be happily solved.

Most mothers said that they were failing to obtain dependable financial settlements with absent fathers through the family courts, although in some instances they did not know whether their husbands were paying or defaulting because payments were made through the courts to provincial assistance programs.

There appeared to be consensus that it is next to impossible to obtain orders for a level of maintenance that is commensurate with the needs of dependent children. It was said that men frequently misrepresent their financial situations by leaving the labour force during the period of the court hearings so that the maintenance award will be nil or negligible. Afterwards they return to a well-paid job. There appears to be need for maintenance orders based on longer periods of time. The greatest difficulty is in enforcing maintenance orders, especially where it becomes the wife's responsibility to try to secure enforcement. These efforts are usually unsuccessful.

Provincial boundaries may be a headache to the federal government but they are a godsend to family deserters. The mothers feel it is almost a miracle if support is obtained from a father who has gone to another province, though it does happen sometimes.

Delays in obtaining support are numerous. At times a wife may be required to appear before the court as many as four times. Social welfare legislation may allow welfare departments to grant assistance to a mother while awaiting court decision, but in some places no use is made of this permission and mothers are required to lay complaints before obtaining assistance. In part, the difficulty is caused by inadequate staffing in welfare departments and also to prejudice against separated wives. In other localities, public welfare departments are giving service and assistance without insisting that applicants lay charges in court.

We found there was strong opinion that collection of maintenance should be set up as a function of the family court, probably in a special branch of the court. Paragraph 112 of the report of the Royal Commission on The Status

of Women states, "We recommend that the auxiliary services of family courts include an assessment branch dealing with the assessment and payment of alimony and maintenance".

In Manitoba, a brief on maintenance awards suggested a three-pronged attack on the problem: (1) a Provincial Maintenance Award Fund into which maintenance payments would be made and out of which the full award would be paid irrespective of the payment received on behalf of a specific award; (2) the establishment or acceptance of provincial responsibility for the recovery of awards ordered by the courts in recognition of the fact that it is up to the state to enforce laws it is responsible for passing; (3) the setting up of a central registry with all-province participation where all court awards for family maintenance would be recorded, and through which recalcitrant fathers could be traced. The brief suggests that if the penalty for nonpayment were made day-parole with full employment, rather than incarceration in idleness, the deterrent effect would be greatly enhanced.

A brief written for this Inquiry by the Vancouver chapter of Parents Without Partners recommends that uniform rules be developed across Canada on the administration of maintenance and support order agreements, that court orders and agreements be registerable across Canada, that court orders for maintenance from any province be directly enforceable in any other province at nominal cost to the one-parent family concerned, and that delinquent payments on registered and existing agreements be treated as delinquent income taxes.

We found some support for the idea that family courts must be freed from the adversary concept in settling the issues of divorce and separation and that the concept of family arbitration centres should be under study.¹⁷

Family courts are badly crippled. This is what most people seemed to be saying to us. Organizations that claim concern about the work of family courts must look beyond the problems of individual families, severe though these may be, and begin an examination of the purpose, scope, jurisdiction and staff requirements of these courts.

It is not surprising that people thought men and women should know more about legal matters such as maintenance orders, separation agreements, registration requirements and divorce laws.¹⁸

Provincial governments, it was suggested, should circulate reliable information on procedures for obtaining divorces, if only to offset some of the current schemes for cashing in on the new divorce legislation. In one city, there is in circulation a "divorce kit" selling at \$99.

Because this Inquiry was focused on one-parent families, it was to be expected that there would be no examples of successful reconciliation. We heard of very few efforts in that direction. In Winnipeg, people who wanted divorces took matters into their own hands and got results. In the Neighbourhood Service Centres of Greater Winnipeg a group was formed when three women who were separated wanted help in filling out divorce petitions. They knew of other people in the same position and arrangements were made for people to come together if they wished to obtain a divorce on the grounds of three years' separation. Forty people attended the first meeting and about 25 followed through, of which 20 filed their petitions in April 1970. A second group of about 30 people was formed, and the members of the first group helped them. By September 1970, between 45 and 50 people from the two groups had obtained decrees. As they met together, members of the groups expressed strong feelings about the common-law relationships in which some

had been living because they couldn't get a divorce. Their relief in being able to work through the legal complications was tremendous. Their experience in the groups revealed a desire to work on their family problems and the problems of their children. The divorce groups have had a great deal of publicity -- in large part favourable -- and the publicity has drawn into the groups many people who could afford high fees, but who decided to come into the groups on principle, believing that people who need divorces should not be stopped by the high costs.

One of the concerns of newly divorced people is that when a second marriage becomes possible, the question of adoption of the children arises and it is expensive to go through the usual adoption procedures. Some of the smaller Children's Aid Societies can give this service but in large cities the volume may be too great for an organization to handle. There are plans for organizing self-help adoption groups. Family service agencies and others are emphasizing the fact that it is vitally important today for every person to have legal status. In arranging such adoptions, most people are unable to get free help through legal aid: they are not eligible because they are not indigent. Actually, people wanting adoption in the event of remarriage should not need a lawyer. The form is very simple and could be completed at an outside cost of about \$25, instead of the \$200 that might be charged.

Legal aid was reported as generally helpful, depending on the availability of lawyers. The general aim is to guarantee that no person lacks legal services because he lacks money. Provincially subsidized, legal aid is at different stages of development in different regions. The Ontario plan has been regarded as one of the soundest. In that province, responsibility for the administration

of the plan lies with the Law Society of Upper Canada. The responsibility of the Legal Aid Assessment Branch, Department of Social and Family Services, is to assess the resources and needs of applicants and to advise the area directors of the Law Society whether they applicants can pay some part, no part or all of the cost of the legal services they require. The plan completed its third year in 1970 and the Legal Aid Assessment Department its second year. During 1969 to 1970, 50,027 persons were interviewed by the Assessment Branch and recommendations sent to the area directors of the Law Society.

Halifax provides an example of a store-front operation easily accessible to people in need, in addition to a legal aid service conducted along traditional lines. The store-front operation is manned by third-year law students from Dalhousie University. There is a duty counsellor on 24-hour call, each student taking a week at a time on this assignment. The board is headed by a law professor and the federal government has given a grant. The service deals mostly with family problems and gives help that is especially valuable when student lawyers go to court with clients.

In some parts of the country, failure to retain the participation of lawyers is said to be due to the fact that the system "relies upon the private charity of the legal profession to satisfy an evergrowing public demand"¹⁹.

5. Day Care of Children

It is unnecessary -- or we hope it is -- to say that community day care of children is not a little game to make life easy for women who want to get rid of maternal responsibility at the expense of taxpayers. We talked with mothers who are up at 6 a.m. every working day, who get their children and

themselves ready for the day, and by 7:30 or 8 a.m. are away to the day care facility and to their own jobs, and who, after picking up the children between 5 and 6 p.m., spend the evenings at housework.

Sole-support mothers are of course not the only women in the labour force. A booklet published by the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labour²⁰ contains, among many statistics, the information that working mothers number 540,000, and over 1,000,000 children under age 14 have working mothers. One-half of working mothers have children under six years of age. Of all the children under 14 with working mothers, 16 per cent are under three years of age, 20 per cent from three to five years, and the remaining 65 per cent are six to 13 years. There are no regular care arrangements for one in 10 children of working mothers.

Not all women whose children are in day care are employed. Some are sick or half-sick, terribly depressed, overburdened. These have more chance of recovery because of the bit of relief provided by day care outside the home.

What did parents themselves say about day care of children? First, they said that day care is by far the most crucial service in the lives of many one-parent families. Second, those for whom the service was available were enthusiastic about it. We found them to be far ahead of the public at large in their appreciation of the benefits of day care to children. They looked upon day care, not only or even mainly as a convenience for employed mothers, but also as a tremendous asset in the development of small children. They said, for example:

- Jeff goes to the centre in the afternoon. It is marvellous for all of the children and as far as Jeff is concerned his mother can see a real change in him. He has learned to play with other children, he talks better and, in short, is developing

rapidly. The centre is much more than a convenience for her. Before she took Jeff there she had a babysitter who lived in. Jeff was not developing. She feels that group experience is particularly important for an only child. He is learning, sharing and playing.

- A divorced and employed young woman with a small boy, Lennie, said that it has taken her a long time to find day care. She investigated many of the commercial establishments and found that they had very poor facilities. One place, for example, was a two-bedroom bungalow with a small backyard and the proprietor said: "We can't be bothered dressing children every day to go outside". This was a day nursery for about 20 children. The mother had the highest praise for the subsidized day care centre. Not only do they have a good and stimulating program for the children but the staff members are all warm and resourceful in their relationships with the children. Lennie will be ready for kindergarten in the fall and this will constitute a problem. They will probably have to move to a place near the grandmother's home. Sometimes children can go to the kindergarten for half days and the other half day to the day nursery but this is geographically limited. Only children in certain kindergartens can be given this advantage if they also live close to the day nursery.

Some of the parents expressed or implied some reservations:

- In the course of her remarks about housing, this employed mother expressed indignation about the fragmentation of social services. It makes things almost impossible for sole parents when day care facilities are in one section of the city and other services are elsewhere.

- This young woman has one child in subsidized family day care. The child goes to a home down the street. His mother appreciates the care, the convenient location and the genuine kindness of the day care mother, yet she is rather wistful because her child does not have a higher standard of care and therefore a better chance of social development. Probably this day care home is physically poor, with nothing to stimulate a child's interest.

- One mother had suffered from the lack of subsidized day care in a small community, where day care cost \$8 a day. For her, this amount was prohibitive. She moved to a large city, mainly to find the community resources essential to her.

There were mothers who said they had given up jobs because they were unable to make satisfactory child care arrangements. Others felt that they would consider employment seriously if they could be sure of day care for

their younger children. One person made a somewhat different point when she said that judging by her own experience, as well as the observations of others, the lack of day care services means that sick marriages continue because women are unable to establish themselves in employment with appropriate care for their children.

In a brief addressed to this Inquiry from Parents Without Partners in Vancouver,²¹ it is stated that a parent with sole custody of children soon finds out that opportunities for recreation, study, training and employment all hinge on getting adequate care for their children when they are absent. . More and better qualified child care is needed. The group recommends that people receiving public assistance be encouraged to take child care courses if they are suitably qualified and that they be given opportunities to work in this field. The group emphatically called for more day care for all ages of children, provided by competent and qualified people, and meeting government standards. The brief stresses the need for supervision of school children from the end of school hours to the time when their parents are free to meet them and during holidays and vacation. "At present some single parents must take leave of absence, or even quit their jobs, because adequate child care in the summer is not available."

We found that professionals in the day care field and in allied fields are much more critical than the users of the service.

In some communities there is no child care under certain age levels and these levels differ from city to city. There are cities without family day care or foster day care, as it is sometimes called. The development of after-school care is slow, with nothing available in most districts. Present facilities are of little use to shift workers. These facilities are geared

to the needs of 9 to 5 workers, which means white collar workers. There are children who need day care because of the illness or deep depression of mothers, or because of home conditions that must seriously handicap them, perhaps for life. Very few of the children so situated have any chance of experience outside the home until they enter Grade 1 to compete with children already far ahead of them in development. There are serious problems connected with the number, distribution and location of day care centres and comparatively few of the subsidized centres have any transportation for the children to compensate for the distances between centres.

Too many people simply do not know about the subsidized day care that is actually available. We interviewed one employed mother in serious need of this service who said she had simply stumbled on the information which led her to apply for the excellent care that her children are now receiving, and which they should have been receiving much earlier.

There is a continuing unsolved problem for mothers who are new to this country. They do not want children taken out of their own cultural milieu. To them, day care seems threatening because it takes children out of their own environment, yet they may need the service badly.

There are unsettled arguments about desirable standards. Some leaders emphasize more than others the need for comprehensive neighbourhood programs with flexible hours, and these people contended that flexibility and involvement of the community are in fact desirable standards. The Halifax Neighbourhood Centre reported that "day care is no longer in our hands and has been passed over the parents of the children attending this service. They have formed a cooperative and a number of mothers and interested individuals from the board of directors. Their funds come from the Social Planning

Department of the city and a sliding fee scale has been adopted for day care services." In other communities, greater emphasis was placed on services to children that are based on knowledge of the way children develop -- the implications being that our society already has too much mismanagement of children in early childhood.

It is regrettable that in some communities there is less than satisfactory dovetailing of day care services with homemaker services and of group day care with family day care. The organizational framework in Vancouver is designed to overcome such problems, with the Family Service Centres encompassing a homemaker service and day care which includes both group and family day care. In London, Ontario, a study has been in progress through the initiative of the Day Care Services Committee of United Community Services. In this community, nursery schools have a long record of excellent service. Day care facilities have only recently been developed and there has been no family day care. Citizens who are thinking about the future are speculating on the possibilities of a centre in one location where a total caring service might be provided, including nursery school, day nursery and the administration of family day care. This would also serve as a demonstration, teaching and research centre. In Winnipeg, early in 1971, an Ad Hoc Committee on day care developed the following recommendation for consideration of a public meeting: "That an on-going structure be developed on a community-wide basis whose concern would be day care for children in Metropolitan Winnipeg. This structure would be representative of users and potential users of service, providers of service at all levels, those responsible for licensing and affecting services at government levels and interested citizens' groups and organizations involved in promoting the services to children and their families."

In at least one region there is a tug-of-war about who will finance day care. United appeals are resisting the idea of supporting facilities that should be completely financed as public programs. Those who control public money seem convinced that voluntary support should not diminish, however logical it may be for public funds to come into the picture. In day care, the principle of public responsibility is now well established. This principle is acknowledged by the assumption of government responsibility for licensing and standards. What is at issue is not the principle but the level of public support. Moreover, for voluntary organizations and individuals who are engaged in this field, the lack of capital grants from public funds has been a serious obstacle to the extension of facilities, for renovations or equipment. The various tests of family need to determine the level of subsidy for each child are proving time-consuming in some jurisdictions. Questions are raised about whether there is any reason for professional staff to be involved in this administrative task, and whether tests need to be reviewed so often. Anyway, the results are bound to be unfair. A young woman with a cheap flat, debt-free, may fail to qualify for subsidy, while one with a high rent and a pile of debts may qualify.

The Canadian Council on Social Development's statement Social Policies for Canada, Part I says that a basic network of social welfare services for all who need them would include day care of children, perhaps as part of the school system, whether or not mothers are in the labour force. According to the report of the Royal Commission on The Status of Women, the Commission received representations from every part of Canada, from communities of every size, parents, professional men and women, and from organizations, all urging the need for

child care services. The report stresses the merits of public responsibility in this field. "Governments justify the spending of increasingly large funds at the level of higher education as a means of developing human resources. In the light of what we know about the importance of the pre-school years, a well planned child care program would seem to be just as important."

6. Health Services

Taken as a whole, it was clear that parents are better satisfied with health care than with any other section of community services. Most of them said they were pleased with hospital outpatient departments, school clinics, family doctors (many of whom will make house calls if necessary), and with provincial programs for hospital and medical care, with enrolment underwritten by welfare departments if a family is receiving public assistance or sometimes under other circumstances where family means are limited.

In most communities, parents of low income described their difficulties in obtaining dental care.

Some employed parents were at a serious disadvantage because clinics are open when they are working and closed in the evenings and weekends when they could attend.

Difficulties in obtaining or affording any effective means of birth control were described by some of the women.

There were indications that resources for mental health varied greatly in distribution and scope. For example, there were said to be excellent services, at least in some communities, for treatable children under 12 years of age, and in the same areas there might be no intensive treatment in the

age range of 12 to 16. Group homes with any therapeutic capability are far from meeting needs. The drug control program was generally regarded as poor.

In Social Policies for Canada, the CCSD recognizes this uneven development of mental health services and recommends: "Specific programs should be worked out to strengthen and expand community mental health services, and clear administrative procedures should be established to ensure coordination of mental health services with other local health and welfare services."

We found that families in Halifax were enthusiastic about the Comprehensive Health Care Program sponsored and supported by Dalhousie University.²² For some of the families, overburdened with many problems, this program seemed to be their best hope of survival without complete disaster. Originally it was manned by fourth-year medical students but now it involves third-year medical students, dietetic interns, student nurses, and student social workers. It is well supervised by senior staff of these professions. The original idea, which is still basic, is to provide learning for the professions through health care of families in their own homes and neighbourhoods. There is emphasis on teamwork and on involvement in the community, in the belief that capabilities in these two directions will be more and more essential in the future. There are 100 families in the program. The families receive a high level of service because the plans are assessed by senior professionals. Student social workers were involved for the first time recently, with such success that the number is to be increased.

7. Big Brothers -- Big Sisters

Big Brother services have been described by the Big Brothers of Metropolitan Toronto as a professional counselling service to boys from fatherless families with the aim of preventing or arresting behavioural disorders and family deterioration as a result of the father loss. Volunteers form a one-to-one relationship with boys. The volunteer works under the guidance of a professional social worker. The latter may also be a direct counselling resource for the boy and his mother. The social worker assumes responsibility for the screening of volunteers, the assessment of the family, and the matching of volunteer and little brother.

These services are to be found in several large and medium-sized communities in Canada with their national office in Hamilton, Ontario. The need is far out-running the resources. For example, in Toronto in 1970, there were 761 relationships between big brothers and little brothers, and in January of that year 252 boys were waiting. At about the same time (the end of 1969) in British Columbia, there were 345 relationships and 424 fatherless boys were waiting.

Extensions of this form of service are coming slowly. In London, a Big Brother program was in careful preparation in 1970. The YWCA in Halifax recently launched a Big Sister program. The little girls are from 7 to 11 years of age and they are selected from YWCA clubs, to which they were originally introduced by public health nurses and workers of the Children's Aid Society. A student from the Maritime School of Social Work is concentrating on the launching of this program.

The Big Brother associations have had problems in recruiting and training a sufficient number of volunteers who are prepared to give their time and attention over long periods. The major concern has been financing, and increasingly the associations are seeking to make arrangements for provincial and municipal grants within the Canada Assistance Plan.

In at least two cities, organizations of sole parents have raised money for Big Brother services. This kind of mutual aid would be worth the consideration of similar organizations elsewhere.

The Toronto Big Brother association has been engaged in a four-year study that was in its final phase early in 1970. Funded by the Department of National Health and Welfare, the study involved 637 families in compiling information that will be useful to governments and agencies. At the same time, the association's research department has experimented with a plan for tutoring, using volunteers from a community college, and also with a program of travel for 150 boys.

Families who have had service from Big Brothers spoke to us warmly of their work. Others wished that the service could be made available to them. Here are one or two comments:

- Jim, aged 12, now has a Big Brother, Bob, and Bob takes both Jim and his younger brother out with him. He is good to the boys and they are very enthusiastic about him. The smaller boy attaches himself to Bob and says "I'm going out with my daddy".

- Recently, a mother saw a TV program about the new Big Brother association that is supposed to be starting. She telephoned, and the association will soon be able to provide a Big Brother for her son. She hopes that something will be done to provide Big Sisters for girls. She thinks that very often girls are the ones who have the problems in a broken family.

8. Churches

Do sole-parent families find much moral or material support in the churches? We cannot generalize. The men and women we interviewed appeared to be a cross-section of the public at large, with feelings about religion that were warm, hostile or indifferent.

- A young woman whose husband deserted her said that while association with the church is some help, it is also difficult for her because she feels out of everything in the church. Her faith places great stress on the solidarity of the family and the duty of a wife to support her husband with complete fidelity. She feels that she is not really married and yet she does not belong among the single people.

- This young woman who has several children is an example of a person who was converted to Christianity. She was not a member of the church before her separation and it was some time afterwards that she joined. She did not find her way to the church on her own initiative but she responded to the friendship extended to her by the minister and his wife. Since she joined the church, the minister and the congregation have been her main support and help. At times they have helped her materially, but what she values mainly is the friendship and companionship that she finds in the congregation.

- One of the men said that men and women with experience such as his can find no comfortable place in churches. He said also that there are exceptions, and recently, for example, he heard of a sole-parent group that has been started in one of the churches. He does not think that there is the slightest chance of Christianity or Judaism getting rid of the impression they have given through the centuries of being unsympathetic toward people in marital difficulty.

- This young woman is active in the church. Her minister has been very kind, especially at the time of her separation. He is not a trained counsellor and does not pretend to give any professional help but she finds him kind and wise. Her relationship with her church has not changed in any way since her marriage breakdown and separation.

A criticism that seems to have a good deal of validity came from parents who believe that churches are at fault because their programs of family life education are strictly for married couples. This practice means that, especially in those churches in which divorced people are not apt to remarry, most sole parents are permanently shut out of family life education programs.

9. Summer Camps

Summer camps are greatly appreciated where they are available. The need for holidays for sole-support mothers as well as their children should be given more serious consideration by funding bodies and organizations with camp facilities.

10. Counselling Services

What are usually called counselling services, for want of a better term, are available in a variety of organizations and institutions. We were told that they are effective because the services are of a good quality. But we were also told that they are seriously limited in volume and availability. They are handicapped by the low visibility of all preventive services and by the seemingly high cost of individualized services. These services are thinly distributed everywhere and completely lacking in large areas. A family situation such as the following illustrates the point:

- During a dozen years of marriage this couple and their four children moved several times. When they lived in the country, conditions were primitive, with no water or proper heating. They tried to establish themselves in town but the father deserted. The mother worked until she earned enough to get to a city where she had some connections. Each time they moved, whatever furniture she had gathered together had to be left behind. In the city the community resources that came to the aid of these badly damaged children and their distressed mother include professional counselling services involving both individual and group therapy, residential therapy for one child, and homemaker services for another child when foster day care proved unequal to his needs. This is an example of community help mobilized for a family in serious trouble -- perhaps an illustration that some families must be in extreme jeopardy before help is forthcoming. Unfortunately, intensive help is not available to families outside perhaps half-a-dozen metropolitan areas in Canada.

The public does not always understand the scope of family agencies and children's services.

- One woman spoke of her own experience as a recipient of broadly based service and she added a useful comment about a limitation in this service. It was because of her experience at the time of her separation that she became interested in other individuals and families. As far as her living arrangements were concerned, the agency donated furniture and got students to come and plaster and paint with supplies that the organization provided. She says that she was terribly depressed for at least six months. She would never have made it without the workers of the agency. Everything was done to give her moral support. But after the legal battles, one is alone. The agencies do a good job, taking hold at the time of a family breakup and helping in many practical ways with the re-establishment of the family physically. They help mothers through court cases. But after these activities, a woman tends to withdraw. It is then that she is gripped with the realization that she is alone. At this point community services do little to help her to avoid isolation. Perhaps they don't realize the dangers at this point in the life of a one-parent family.

- We met a family in which a teenaged daughter is seeing a counsellor in a family agency every two weeks. She finds this helpful. It gives her somebody to talk to when she gets resentful against her mother. She has recommended the counsellor to two of her friends who are having difficulties at home.

11. Family Life Education

It goes without saying that the subject of education for family life was introduced by groups and individuals. One meeting of sole parents discussed the need for a good standard of pre-marriage counselling, and it was generally agreed that the government should support such a service. The group was inclined to feel that marriage counselling should begin in the last two years of senior high school.

Another group of parents emphasized the need for parents to know how to communicate with their children by talking and listening. These parents were worried about the adolescent boys and girls in their families.

In conversations, individual parents were apt to mention their feelings of inadequacy about sex education. We were impressed with the fact that some of them did not even know where to turn for information. Teachers, social workers and others may feel that there is more than enough written material at everyone's fingertips. It is not so with parents who have never been inside a library, and who are unaccustomed to learning from the written word. There are others who, though reasonably well educated academically, still feel at a loss in this one aspect of parental responsibility.

12. Homemaker Services

Homemaker services were treated roughly by most of the people who had anything to say about them. The service was described as totally inadequate and hedged in by limitations and restrictions. In some places it is no use in an emergency. If a child has been taken out of day care because of illness the mother must stay home from work or else pay \$10 a day for a housekeeper. Some of the organizations say that they cannot do anything on 24-hour notice and most childhood illnesses are emergencies. As a result, many employed mothers are following the bad practice of saving their holidays in order to have time off when children are ill.

There were also criticisms that no long-term service or 24-hour service is available, only a few categories of need are covered, and the service is no more available and accessible than it was years ago.

This is not to say there is no appreciation of the value of homemaker services when and where they are available.

- One mother with four children said that at one time a homemaker came for two weeks when she was ill. "They" would not allow the homemaker to remain any longer, as it was against their policy to have a homemaker stay longer than that in any one place. The homemaker was wonderful and the children liked her. This happened at a time when the mother was in day hospital. She left the hospital without the consent of the doctors because there was no one to look after the children when the homemaker left. She says the hospital didn't like her action.

- Another young woman with two children lives in a community with no homemaker service. She says the service is very seriously needed and she worries about what would happen if she became ill. She wonders if the children would have to be put in foster homes.

Men who are sole parents are naturally the principal victims of the scarcity of homemaker services. Out of the experiences of this Inquiry we suggest that men who are sole parents are probably the ideal spokesmen for the need for homemaker services, for training of more homemakers, and for better personnel practices, including the recognition of the homemaker vocation in labour standards.

13. Some New Forms of Organization

Among the newly developing community organizations are self-help groups, which are of interest to some sole parents. One example is the Winnipeg Council of Self-Help Groups, formed in 1970 for the purpose of sharing information and developing better communications among the groups and to unite them in joint projects. The budgets of all of the groups have been combined. The Council is receiving a grant from the Department of National Health and Welfare for a three-year demonstration. The Council consists of one representative from each group, and the central office has a full-time director and other staff.

A combined newsletter has been planned. Among the goals of the Council and its member groups are: to supply food at the lowest possible cost to people in poverty, to inform citizens of their rights and assist them in grievances, to take action to bring about changes in the social and economic system, to be an information centre, to protect tenant rights and improve housing conditions, to help mothers alone and on welfare to function better as mothers and to cope with poverty, to plan recreation, to help chronically unemployable people become employable through training and through change of attitude, to take action to create meaningful jobs and provide information about job opportunities, to improve working conditions, and to help people file their own divorce applications. The people who are to be helped are tenants, welfare recipients and citizens on low income. Early in 1971 the Council was receiving reports from 10 self-help groups. The worst problems pertain to sole parents -- loneliness, and their need for recreation. The Council will pay for babysitting and for transportation to enable women to attend groups.

In the Winnipeg project, as in similar ones in other cities, the new organizations face a problem that is familiar to older organizations -- the problem of involving people. The actual membership in self-help groups is usually a small fraction of the numbers eligible. Those who are prepared to carry responsibilities are still fewer. In one region, an informed estimate was that out of 7,000 people on social assistance, less than three dozen were active as their representatives for citizen rights. Women who are sole parents and especially those who are accustomed to the limitations of life on assistance are not in the habit of leaving their neighbourhoods to attend meetings. Some of the women say they are afraid it would be an expense to join a group.

They say "if you don't have the money you are embarrassed every time you are asked to spend". Middle class women when they are asked to spend have no hesitation in refusing if it is inconvenient. Women on public welfare become embarrassed.

Neighbourhood groups are developing, especially in the older parts of large cities. Parents in such districts explained that the people there do not often go outside the neighbourhood. There is apt to be a low level of academic education. The neighbourhood services may be new projects or they may be extensions of long-established organizations. They are likely to include welfare rights committees, tenant associations, any number of interest groups and children's activities and perhaps a co-op project for consumers. They may be represented on welfare appeal boards or on the boards and committees of other community agencies. They encounter the problems that beset most organizations, including the apathy of the majority of people and the dangers of control falling into the hands of the few that are prepared to be active.

Community leaders and organizations new and old are obviously struggling to clear the way so that the voices of people in need can be heard. One method is used by citizen groups which develop statements of their aspirations and recommendations for use in presentations to, or confrontations of, elected officials, departments and organizations. Staff members in neighbourhood services are in a strategic but complicated position. Some of them want to base their activities on the wishes of the neighbourhood residents, while their agency with its central office may be, they feel, imposing a lot of rigid procedures upon them. But how can the real wishes of the neighbourhood be identified? A project may amount to little more than staff members doing their

own thing, or wanting to, or a small number of neighbourhood leaders enjoying the excitement of starting a project although they are not necessarily representative of the citizens of the neighbourhood. There is a great deal of feeling also about the discontinuity of programs. We were told that projects are started without plans for on-going responsibility, and after a flurry of dramatic activity, others must pick up the pieces, if indeed the pieces are ever picked up. Social planning bodies are seeking to facilitate the breakthrough of citizen participation and neighbourhood self-determination in ways to ensure the kind of continuity and sense of direction that will enable new groups to achieve more than disappointed hopes and the experience of failure.²³

The Opportunities Program in Vancouver is an example of a project that combines citizen participation, vocational training, employment, and the outreach of established voluntary and public services. We were told that this program started with five mothers who were not happy to just sit at home on social assistance. They were mostly sole parents. After about 18 months there were 450 volunteers who worked in about 88 organizations. There have been 56 schools in the program, 21 of them using the services of volunteers at one time. The program is financed on the basis of the Canada Assistance Plan and shared costs. Participants are called volunteers and paid a training grant which is an incentive allowance, available through the city social service department. An Opportunity Committee is elected by all the volunteers, and there is a general meeting of volunteers every three months.

The aim of the Opportunities Program is to provide opportunities for people who are on social assistance to help in neighbourhood programs, to operate self-help activities and to train and move into employment. A second

aim is to enrich services in neighbourhood social agencies, schools and recreation centres by using trained neighbourhood people as assistants to professionals. The rate of allowance is based on \$50 a month for a minimum of 30 hours of volunteer work and training. Expenses for transportation and babysitting may be added. Rent in public housing is not affected by this income. The office is run by citizens who are also on the incentive allowance, and community development workers are available as consultants. The Opportunities office helped in the coordination of arrangements with the city social service department and other agencies. It provides information and hopes to operate a future job registry. An established agency, the Neighbourhood Services Association, acts in a consultative capacity, and at the time of this Inquiry it was handling the accounting for the program. This is not a purchase-of-service arrangement with the city social service department: the whole program developed out of the work that Neighbourhood Services was doing in the area, and its relationship with the program has continued. At the time of this Inquiry a survey of the results of the program was proceeding. It appeared likely that a high proportion of the volunteers who have gone through the course are working, if only part time.

No one could fail to be impressed by the evidence of what the Opportunities Program meant to many of the women on social assistance. They told about it with eagerness and hopefulness. Here is how only one of them described it.

- When the Opportunities Program developed she took advantage of it, and is doing 30 hours a week and making \$50 a month. She is enjoying it tremendously and would like to learn enough and get enough experience to work in these kinds of activities, at least part time. She mentions that a person can earn a certain amount in a month before social assistance is cut, and she says this would be a tremendous advantage. She is going to try to establish herself on this basis. The little bit of extra money would mean greater opportunities for her little girl, she feels. She would like to make sure that her daughter gets to hear music, and she would hope to be able to give her better food more consistently.

14. Organizations of Sole Parents

Among the reasons for the launching of this Inquiry was the comparatively recent emergence of an increasing number of organizations, the membership of which consists of sole parents. Many were known to be self-help groups offering practical assistance and emotional support to their numbers. Some included a social action component in their program and had presented briefs on social issues to royal commissions, provincial legislatures and local authorities. There seemed to be a degree of interest in forming a national association of these groups but no one could be sure of the extent of this interest.

At the Canadian Council on Social Development, the staff immediately undertook to locate as many of these groups as possible. As a result, 131 groups were identified in the 10 provinces and Yukon. This number included some self-help groups that included but were not exclusive to sole parents. This original number increased during subsequent weeks as the existence of other groups was reported. The Council opened communications with the groups, informing them about this Inquiry and asking for their assistance in the compilation of information through the use of a questionnaire for one-parent organizations (Appendix 5).

During the period of interviewing the parents in one-parent families, some of the organizations of sole parents were also contacted. Because we were primarily in search of information on the problems of individual parents, what we learned about the organizations as such was likely to be incidental.

Most of the organizations were found to be small, which confirmed information received for example from Parents Without Partners, which reported that over two-thirds of its 500 chapters consist of less than 100 members.

Considering their small size and the early stage of their development, we would be inclined to question the elaborate constitutions and bylaws in some instances. An organization that should be flexible and experimental can be unnecessarily restricted by regulations that develop before any momentum is gained.

Some groups, as part of their structure, had professional advisory boards. Again one wonders if such structural devices are serving effectively, and whether a more flexible and broader membership base would not meet the need for expert knowledge, if there is such a need.

In the programs of activities, the most general component was recreation for adults and children. Some groups have a speaker at each meeting, addressing them on some subject of interest to sole parents. Some groups have gone in for studies of a variety of subjects, for example of family courts, and some have produced briefs or educational material useful to members. Some, notably the large and well-established organizations, have raised money for their own organizations or for community services of special value to sole parents such as Big Brothers. We found a good deal of discussion of the possible value, as part of the club program, of therapy groups, sensitivity groups or encounter groups. One of the men who was interviewed who has had substantial experience in this type of group, says that if he had one recommendation to make about resources for sole-parent families, he would recommend the formation of groups where people could freely share their feelings and search for solutions of their problems. He has confidence in these methods, even for severely disturbed people. On the other hand, fear was expressed about this type of program, and the fear was always that leadership would get into the hands of people who are not competent to lead such groups and who

might do actual harm. Some people thought that competent individual counselling would be more useful, or discussion groups on serious topics led by people who can handle the emotional hangups of some of the people in the group. There were others who felt the need for clarification of the aims of discussion groups. Leadership training and training in making group decisions had an appeal for many people. This latter idea is pursued in an article in the journal The Single Parent.²⁴ The author says "The process of learning leadership skills often is the real turning point in many a single parent's life. Good leadership is really a clear understanding of good organization and the ability to deal with people. These are qualities which are not directed simply to chapter growth. They are really directed at personal growth. I have seen many people whose lives have been dramatically changed by their experience in Parents Without Partners but these have always been the people who somehow got involved in the mechanics of making the organization work. Many of them were timid, insecure and often disorganized when they first came."

The organizations certainly have their problems, which may be either minor practical difficulties or problems that are harder to define or to solve.

Not all of the groups have convenient and attractive places to meet and not all of them have enough technical knowledge about group dynamics to make the best use of what they do have.

There are some who dislike the idea of a Canadian organization being tied into an organization based in the United States, as is the case in Parents Without Partners.

In several groups the lack of male members was deplored.

In most groups there is a rapid turnover in membership due, in some instances, to remarriage. The fact that in every club some members are free to remarry and some are not does perhaps make for certain strains in relationships, as some said was the case.

It appeared that in at least one instance an organization had been launched with vigor and had moved too quickly into the arena of social action, including confrontations with City Hall. The organization took group action before it had become a solid group. The whole question of social action in this type of organization deserves consideration. The organizations, if they are to function well, should draw membership from all economic groups and therefore the members may not all be personally concerned with improvements in public assistance, as would be the case in a welfare rights group. These organizations are also vulnerable to counter-attacks because of whatever community prejudices may still linger about separated couples.

Some of these situations suggest that it would be valuable if sole-parent organizations had access to a knowledgeable consultant who would facilitate the development of sound programs.

Some of the problems are intangible. For example, we talked to women who are unlikely to join a sole-parents group and who spoke with some disfavour of such organizations. It may be suspected that they do not want to be identified with other sole parents because unconsciously they share the conventional public prejudices about people involved in marriage breakdown.

Within the organizations there are problems of a kind that are hard for any organization to handle, but they are more prevalent in organizations of sole parents. When people first come into the organization they are uptight;

they have lost their prospective; they are not objective; they want to talk in circles about what has happened to them. Yet one of the arguments for such organizations is that they do give people a chance to talk themselves out in the presence of people who understand.

Even more difficult to handle without further damage to relationships are the situations in which gossip circulates in an organization. Some non-members claimed that this was their principal reason for keeping away from such groups which, they hear, are plagued by friction. On this problem, the president of one of the groups expressed himself in the club's newsletter, saying that he and others were disturbed because a small group had taken it upon themselves to sit in judgment on their fellow members' private lives. He was "fully aware that our public image is vitally important and that a group such as ours is constantly open to public criticism. This we must guard against. But the decision on how this is to be done is not up to a few but to the group as a whole."

Problems related to the management of the sex drive probably underlie many of the stressful situations in organizations as well as in family life. When club meetings turn into exercises in hating the opposite sex, or when seduction becomes a principal aim, one may question whether mismanaged sex drives that create such chaos in organizations are also responsible for the collapse of marriages. At least one person thought that the question called for research and study.

Whether or not people belonged to sole parent organizations, they were unanimous that such organizations are badly needed because of the acute need among sole parents for adult companionship and for communication

with other adults. There were some who spoke of what they consider to be equally serious needs for parent education in home management or child guidance. A clergyman in a downtown church in a congested area said there is great need for groups for women who are sole parents. There is danger of segregation, but it's probably not as great a danger as leaving the mother at home with no solutions and going crazy with loneliness. Without these kinds of recreation facilities there is just nowhere to go, especially with limited funds. There is, of course, need for a good babysitting service -- not a particularly good solution, but better than family situations without any such resource.

Members of the sole-parent organizations talked about some of the advantages of membership. They enjoyed the recreation -- the dances, beach parties, etc. Another point on which there was general agreement was that there is some advantage in knowing that there are other people in the same boat with problems similar to one's own. They were not so sure about educational programs. "Very few people of my age want to be educated", said one woman dryly.

Some organizations stress the program for children. But in some instances this part of the program has not gained momentum, and some parents said this was because school children's lives are over-organized anyway. One of the men, however, said he took his children to a party where they had a wonderful time and afterwards he explained to them that all of the children there were children who had only one parent. He felt that they were impressed with the idea that such a large group of children should be in the same position as themselves. Another man believes in the sole parent organization he belongs to because it provides a social outlet for some who are let out of

a "couples society". With small children the organization's program is good. For teenagers it is not so good and most of them can't be bothered. For adults taking some definite responsibility, the group does something for one's self-respect which is apt to have been battered in the course of the separation. He commented that at the organization parties nobody wants to go home because then they will be alone again.

* * * * *

There is no reason why the writers of this report should have the last word. It would be better for readers to turn back to preceding pages and to review the circumstances and ideas of some of the participating parents.

In a final summing up, one can only re-emphasize the great variety of one-parent families and urge all Canadians to lay aside their stereotypes and to recognize the emergence of a variety of family lifestyles. We believe that in this Inquiry we have been talking to men and women whose experiences have left them with sharp perceptions of themselves, of other people, and of society as a whole. They have talents for enriching their own lives and those of others through community relationships. Only a few of them are active as citizens in their community; others have not found a way to participate. There is a massive job ahead to find those parents who have unused potential for making their communities better for their families, and their families better for their communities, and to open the way for them to play their full part in community life.

STATISTICAL DATA

A. The Families

As pointed out in the body of this report, no attempt was made to obtain a random sample of one-parent families for interviewing. Nor is it claimed that these families are representative of the general population of one-parent families. However, it was thought that it would be useful to tabulate the statistical data collected and to present this information in table form.

For the purpose of this project, a one-parent family is defined as consisting of one parent, male or female, who is widowed, divorced, separated, deserted or unmarried, and one or more children under the age of 18.

One hundred and thirteen such families were interviewed in seven communities: Vancouver, Winnipeg, London, Halifax-Dartmouth, the Hull region, as well as Southwestern Ontario, and the Grey County rural area.

A total of 20 interviews were completed in each of the following: Vancouver, Winnipeg, London, Halifax-Dartmouth, and the rural area of Grey County; 13 were completed in the Hull region.

The total sample shows a ratio of approximately 10 females interviewed for every male.

TABLE I

SEX OF PARENT BY MARITAL STATUS

	<u>No. of Men</u>	<u>No. of Women</u>	<u>Total No.</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Widowed	2	12	14	12.4
Divorced	3	22	25	22.1
Separated	4	51*	55	48.7
Deserted	1	7	8	7.1
Unmarried		11	11	9.7
Total	10	103	113	100.0

*In 4 instances spouse is serving a prison term
in 1 instance spouse was charged with bigamy

TABLE II

AGE OF PARENT BY NUMBER OF YEARS OF SOLE - PARENT STATUS

<u>Age of Parent</u>	<u>Number of Years</u>							
	<u>Under 1 Year</u>		<u>1 - 4</u>		<u>5 & Over</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 25			6	5.3	1	.9	7	6.2
25 - 34	7	6.2	36	31.8	5	4.4	48	42.4
35 - 44	2	1.8	23	20.3	13	11.5	38	33.6
45 - 54			7	6.2	8	7.1	15	13.3
55 & Over					1	.9	1	.9
Age Unknown			2	1.8	2	1.8	4	3.6
Total	9	8.0	74	65.4	30	26.6	113	100.0

TABLE III

AGE AND SEX OF CHILDREN BY SEX OF PARENT

	<u>MEN (10)</u>		<u>WOMEN (103)</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Pre-School (0 - 5)	2		45	27	74	21.5
Latency Age (6 - 12)	6	7	83	74	170	49.4
Adolescent (13 - 18)	2	6	36	41	85	24.7
Older (over 18)	2	1	6	6	15	4.4
Total	12	14	170	148	344	
Per cent	46.2	53.8	53.5	46.5		

TABLE IV

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME BY SEX OF PARENT

	<u>No. of Men</u>	<u>No. of Women</u>	<u>Total No.</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Public Assistance		68(2)	68	60.2
Earnings	7	30(3)	37	32.8
Pension		4(4)	4	3.5
U.I.C.	3(1)	1(5)	4	3.5
Total	10	103	113	100.0

(1) In 2 instances the individual's income is supplemented by public assistance.

(2) In 4 instances the individual's income is supplemented by support payment from spouse.

In 5 instances the individual's income is supplemented by part-time employment.

(3) In 7 instances the individual's income is supplemented by support payment from spouse.

In 1 instance the individual's income is supplemented by support payment from spouse as well as a Provincial Program Allowance.

In 1 instance the individual's income is supplemented by public assistance.

(4) In 1 instance the individual's pension is supplemented by public assistance as well as part-time employment.

In 1 instance the individual's pension is supplemented by public assistance.

In 1 instance the individual's pension is supplemented by part-time employment.

(5) In 1 instance the individual's income is supplemented by public assistance.

TABLE V

EMPLOYED SOLE PARENTS

AMOUNT OF EARNINGS (GROSS MONTHLY) BY SEX OF PARENT

	<u>No. of Men</u>	<u>No. of Women</u>	<u>Total No.</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
<u>Dollars</u> <u>per month</u>				
Under 300		5(1)	5	13.5
300 - 349		2	2	5.4
350 - 399		6	6	16.2
400 - 449	1	6(1)	7	18.9
450 - 499		2	2	5.4
500 - 549	1		1	2.8
550 - 599		2(2)	2	5.4
600 - 649		4(3)(4)	4	10.8
650 - 699				
700 and over	2	1(1)	3	8.1
Unknown	3	2	5	13.5
Total	7	30	37	100.0

(1) In 1 instance the individual's gross income includes the support payment by the spouse.

(2) In 1 instance the individual's gross income includes a public assistance supplement.

(3) In 3 instances the individual's gross income includes the support payment paid by the spouse.

(4) In 1 instance the individual's gross income includes the support payment paid by the spouse as well as a Provincial Program Allowance.

TABLE VI

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Employed Full Time</u>	<u>Employed Part Time</u>	<u>In Training</u>	<u>Planning Training</u>	<u>No Plans for Training</u>	<u>Total</u>
Under 25	1			2	3	6
25 - 34	16(1)	2(2)	6	1	21	46
35 - 44	7(3)	4	3	1	19	34
45 - 54	3	2			7	12
55 & Over					1	1
Age Unknown	2		1		1	4
Total	29*	8	10	3	52	103
Per cent	28.1	7.8	9.7	3.8	50.6	100.0

- (1) In 2 instances the individual is also taking training.
- (2) In 1 instance the individual is taking training while another is planning training.
- (3) In 1 instance the individual is a student apprentice therefore earning while training.

*There are a total of 30 women who are listed in Tables IV and V as having reported that earnings were their primary source of income. In this Table, one of the 30 women is listed under "Employed Full Time" because her only other source of income is support from her husband.

TABLE VII

TYPE OF HOUSING BY SEX OF PARENT

	<u>No. of Men</u>	<u>No. of Women</u>	<u>Total No.</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Home Owner	3	13	16	14.1
Rented House	1	18	19	16.8
Rented Apartment	3	51	54	47.8
Rented Room		2	2	1.8
Living With Relatives	2	2	4	3.6
Public Housing	1	17	18	15.9
Total	10	103	113	100.0

TABLE VIII

MEMBERSHIP IN SINGLE PARENT GROUPS BY AGE

	<u>Member</u>		<u>Non-Member</u>		<u>Total</u>
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.
Under 25			5		5
25 - 34	6	12.0	44	88.0	50
35 - 44	5	12.8	34	87.2	39
45 - 54	2	14.4	12	85.6	14
55 and Over			1	100.0	1
Age Unknown	2	50.0	2	50.0	4
Total	15	13.3	98	86.7	113

B. The Sole-Parent Groups

One of the objectives of the project was to identify one-parent organizations as well as to examine their present and potential significance to the one-parent family and, further, to explore the degree of interest among these groups in the formation of a national association and the possible functions of such an association.

We learned that there are differences as well as similarities among such organizations. Some limit their membership to women. Some are composed entirely of mothers on social assistance or mothers' allowance. Others have both men and women in their membership and may include people whose financial circumstances vary greatly. Some groups are new, while others have been in existence for many years. Some are primarily interested in promoting legislation which will improve the lot of the one-parent family. Others have a wide variety of activities for sole parents and their children.

Since we wanted to know more about how the picture shapes up nationally, we sought information about the goals of one-parent organizations, about their activities, about the composition of their membership and about how the various groups are financed.

A total of 136 questionnaires for one-parent family organizations were mailed out at the end of April 1971, of which 47 valid replies have been received and tabulated. Nine organizations replied saying they were not a one-parent organization as such and therefore could not fill out the questionnaire.

Replies were received from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and the Yukon.

Appendix 5 includes a copy of the questionnaire and the covering letter which were sent to one-parent organizations. The material was mailed out in English or French depending on the organization.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF YEARS GROUP HAS BEEN IN OPERATION

	<u>Number of Groups</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Less than one year	3	6.4
1 - 2 years	25	53.2
3 - 4 years	9	19.1
5 - 6 years	6	12.8
More than 6 years	4	8.5
Total	47	100.0

TABLE II

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE BY WHETHER FEE IS EVER WAIVED

<u>Fee</u>	<u>Can be Waived</u>	<u>Never Waived</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
No fee			13	27.7
.50 - \$2.00	6	3	9	19.1
\$2.01-\$5.00	4	3	7	14.9
\$5.01-\$8.00	2	2	4	8.5
\$8.01-\$10.00	5	5	10	21.3
\$10.01-\$15.00	1	3	4	8.5
Total	18	16	47	100.0

TABLE III

PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES OF SINGLE-PARENT GROUPS

<u>Type of Activity</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Response</u>	<u>Total</u>
Social and Recreational	35	2	10	47
Educational Activities	44		3	47
Family Activities	35	1	1	47
Children's Activities	30	5	12	47
Self-Help Activities	36	3	8	47
Social Action	26	3	18	47

TABLE IV

SIZE OF CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

	<u>Number of Groups</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
1 - 25	11	23.4
26 - 50	8	17.0
51 - 75	8	17.0
76 - 100	3	6.4
101 - 200	7	14.9
201 - 300	3	6.4
2500 - 3000(1)	1	2.1
Unknown	6	12.8
Total	47	100.0

- (1) One organization in the province of Quebec had a total membership of about 2900, and has been in existence only for four years. This was the only organization in Canada which reported a membership of more than 300.

TABLE V

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Membership campaigns conducted	25	53.2
No campaigns conducted	18	38.2
No response to this question	4	8.5
Total	47	100.0

TABLE VI

WHEN SOLE-PARENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO JOIN A SOLE-PARENT ORGANIZATION

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
During first year of sole-parent status	14	29.8
After first year of sole-parent status	22	46.8
Mixed (some during first year, others later)	5	10.6
Not known	2	4.3
No response to this question	4	8.5
Total	47	100.0

TABLE VII

MEMBERSHIP EXTENDED TO OTHERS THAN SOLE-PARENTS WHOSE
CHILDREN ARE IN THEIR CARE AND CUSTODY

<u>Membership Includes</u>	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>No Response</u>	<u>Total</u>
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent		
Parents whose children are in the care of a former spouse	33	82.5	7	17.5	7	47
Parents whose children are in the care of relatives	32	86.3	6	13.7	9	47
Parents whose children are in foster homes or institutions	33	82.5	7	17.5	7	47
Parents whose children are all adults (over 21)	25	67.8	12	32.2	10	47
Individuals who are married or remarried	15	37.5	25	62.5	7	47
Individuals who have never been parents	17	42.5	23	57.5	7	47

TABLE VIII

PROBLEMS IN MAINTAINING ORGANIZATION

<u>Type of Problem</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Financial	7	14.9
Lack of interest on part of members	8	17.0
Other	7	14.9
A combination of the above	14	29.8
No Problems	11	23.4
Total	47	100.0

Note: Only 11 organizations (23.4 per cent) reported no problems in maintaining membership. The remainder were experiencing difficulties such as financial problems, lack of interest on the part of members or inability or unwillingness of members to carry a share of responsibilities for the group. Others said that members were afraid to take part in group decisions because of the fear of being cut off welfare. Several mentioned that members expected to be entertained at club meetings, rather than working on projects.

TABLE IX

	<u>INTEREST IN A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION(1)</u>				<u>Total</u>
	<u>Interested</u>	<u>Not Interested</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>No Response</u>	
British Columbia	9	1			10
Alberta	1	1			2
Saskatchewan	2	-			2
Manitoba	4	-			4
Ontario	13	3	1	2	19
Quebec	8				8
New Brunswick	1				1
Yukon	1				1
Total	39 (83%)	5 (10.6%)		3 (6.4%)	47

Note: The project did not seek an official reply from one-parent family organizations, but simply an indication of the extent to which groups may be interested.

TABLE X

<u>NEED FOR A PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION</u>					
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Reply</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Total</u>
British Columbia	5	5			10
Alberta	1	1			2
Saskatchewan	2				2
Manitoba	4				4
Ontario	7	6	6		19
Quebec	6	2			8
New Brunswick	1				1
Yukon				1	1
Total	26(55.3%)	14(29.8%)	6(12.8%)	1(2.1%)	47

ONE-PARENT FAMILY PROJECT

INTERVIEW GUIDE

FOR USE IN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS
WITH HEADS OF ONE-PARENT FAMILIES

Wherever possible the interviews will be conducted in parent's home. (Certain items will need to be omitted or altered in interviews with widowed parents and unmarried mothers.)

1. Identifying Information

- a. Age, sex and education of parent.
- b. Marital status of parent.
- c. Age at marriage. How many years was he married?
- d. How long has he been a lone parent?

2. Children

- a. Age, sex and school status or occupation of children living with parent.
- b. Are there other children who are living away from home? (With absent parent, with relatives, in foster homes, married, etc.)
- c. Were there periods when children were separated from parent? What were the circumstances? How did children respond to separation?

3. Current Living Arrangements

- a. Type of accommodation (house, apartment, owned, rented, public housing, etc.). Parent's opinion about adequacy.
- b. Has type or quality of accommodation changed since becoming single parent?
- c. Are there relatives, friends or others in the home? If so, how are responsibilities for housework divided?
- d. Who has major responsibility for care of children? (Grandmother?). Are the arrangements satisfactory?
- e. Has family moved frequently? Are there plans to move soon?

4. Family Income - Sources and Amounts

- a. Support from former spouse - Amount _____ Regular _____?
- b. Earnings? By which member of family? Amounts _____
- c. Social Assistance.
- d. Former spouse's estate.
- e. Other. Specify.

5. Employment History

- a. Occupation.
- b. Experience since becoming a lone parent. Were reasons for working, not working, or job change related to lone parent status?
- c. If currently employed what are the arrangements for child care? Are they satisfactory?

. Use of Community Resources

With which of the following services has family had contact?

What was the family's experience regarding the accessibility, adequacy and helpfulness of service? Was the family satisfied? Has parent wanted to use a particular service but been reluctant to apply? What changes are needed to make services better?

- a. Family or juvenile court.
- b. Public Welfare.
- c. Manpower - training, placement.
- d. Public housing.
- e. Health services, clinics, VON, etc.
- f. Day Care services.
- g. Homemaker services.
- h. Child welfare services, including foster home care and children's institutions.
- i. Counselling services - family service agencies, big brother associations.
- j. Psychiatric services.
- k. Recreation services - YM, YW, Scouts, boys clubs.
- l. Parent-teachers groups.
- m. One-Parent groups.
- n. Church affiliation. Have parent's feelings about church attendance changed? How? Why?

7. Contact with Former Spouse

- a. What are the nature of the contacts? Frequency?
- b. Parent's present feelings - toward former spouse?
- c. What is the nature of the relationship between the children and the absent parent? Is parent satisfied with this?

8. Difficulties in Adjustment to Lone Parent Status

- a. Parent's experience in adjustment. (Were there feelings of loneliness or isolation? How long did these feelings persist?)
- b. Did children experience difficulties? How did parent handle them?
- c. Did parent have help in problems of adjustment? Would he have wanted help?
- d. How were problems resolved?

9. Contacts with Relatives

- a. Are relationships close? Contacts frequent?
- b. What is depth of relatives' helpfulness? Would parent want more?

10. Social Life

- a. Has social life changed since becoming a lone parent?
- b. Who are parent's present friends? Marital status of friends?
- c. How does parent meet friends?
- d. Is parent satisfied or does he want more?
- e. Is the children's social life affected by being part of a one-parent family? How?

11. Community Attitudes toward One-Parent Families

- a. What is parent's perception of community attitudes?
Can he cite examples?
- b. Has parent experienced discrimination in obtaining housing, credit or in work situations?
- c. Have children experienced difficulties? (At school or with friends).
- d. How does parent handle community attitudes?

12. Other Problems

- a. Has parent experienced other problems which might be related to lone parent status? (For example, problems in child rearing).
- b. How has parent attempted to solve these problems?
- c. What kinds of programs or services (federal, provincial or community) does parent believe are needed to alleviate some of the problems of one-parent families? (Guaranteed annual income, etc.)

13. Present Attitude toward Former Marriage

- a. How does parent feel now toward his marriage?
- b. Would he want to be married again?

14. Goals and Aspirations

- a. What are parent's immediate and long term goals and aspirations? (Further education or training, employment.)
- b. Does parent have a plan for achieving his goals?
- c. What does he want for his children?

15. Interviewer's Impression of the parent, children, home and social environment.

CA/w1
February 4, 1971.

Canadian Council on Social Development

One-Parent Families Project

Guide for Interviews with Agencies

A brief description of the project may be given regarding

- (a) the definition of the term "sole parents" - sex, status, income range
- (b) the interviews with parents
- (c) the national consultation

1. Speaking generally, what services are you providing for one-parent families?
2. Is it usually assumed that organizations such as yours are helping husbands and wives toward reconciliation? Is this largely true or do you increasingly work with parents who have parted and who are unlikely to be reconciled?
3. What are the most serious problems facing heads of one-parent families and children in one-parent families? What community resources are most important to parents and children?
4. Do you consider that effective help is available to one-parent families through the following:
 - a. Family or juvenile court
 - b. Public welfare
 - c. Manpower - training, placement
 - d. Public housing
 - e. Health services, clinics, VON, etc
 - f. Day care services
 - g. Homemaker services
 - h. Child welfare services, including foster home care and children's institutions
 - i. Counselling services - family service agencies, big brother associations
 - j. Psychiatric services
 - k. Recreation services - YM, YWCA, Scouts, boys clubs
 - l. Parent-teachers groups
 - m. One-Parent groups
 - n. Church affiliation. Have parent's feelings about church attendance changed? How? Why?

5. What changes in social policy and administration, if any, would benefit one-parent families?
6. Do you consider that there is discrimination against heads of one-parent families, men or women, or against the children? If so, illustrate.
7. Have you had any contacts with self-help groups of sole parents? If so, describe the nature of the contact and give impressions.
8. Are there any agency statistics or trend data that have a bearing on the subject of this inquiry?
9. Any reports, surveys, briefs, that are relevant?
10. Is there anyone that you would especially like to suggest as a participant in the National Consultation?

The Canadian Council on Social Development
Le Conseil canadien de Développement social

Appendix 4

In reply please quote/Prière de rappeler

800-853

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Public Health Nurses, Social Workers and Others
FROM: Cenovia Addy, Director
RE: Project on One-Parent Families

This is a memorandum for the use of public health nurses, social workers and others who will be asking sole parents for their consent to be interviewed in connection with this project.

The Canadian Council on Social Development is grateful for your help. The following information, we hope, will be useful to you in selecting people who might consent to be interviewed by our interviewer and in explaining the project to them.

The Canadian Council on Social Development is a nongovernmental organization, formerly called the Canadian Welfare Council. The director of this project is an executive member of the Council's staff, Mrs. Cenovia Addy.

The person who will be interviewing sole parents is Miss Lillian Thomson. Prior to retirement, Miss Thomson had years of experience in family service work. She will be interviewing parents in Vancouver, Winnipeg, the Maritimes and Ontario.

The aim of this project is to find out how one-parent families are getting along. We plan to identify the special problems of this large group of families (between 8 and 9 per cent of all Canadian families) and to examine the social policy implications of these problems. The Department of National Health and Welfare is contributing substantially to the cost of this project and will be deeply interested in our findings.

In the main, we hope to achieve the above objective by canvassing the opinions of sole parents. The Advisory Committee of the project consists of men and women who are sole parents. A number of clubs and groups

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55 Parkdale Ottawa K1Y 1E5

Telephone / Téléphone: 613-728-1865
Formerly: The Canadian Welfare Council/Anciennement: Le Conseil canadien du Bien-être
President/Président général: Charles E. Hendry
Chairman, Executive Committee/Président du comité exécutif: Mrs. W. M. Benidickson

of sole parents are collaborating with the Council. We expect to interview 120 heads of one-parent families. A national consultation, attended by sole parents and others, will constitute the second phase of the project.

The parents that we wish to interview may be men or women, in any income bracket, with one or more children under the age of 18, and widowed, divorced, separated, deserted or unmarried.

Please assure the persons you contact of the following:

- (1) All information is confidential. It will not be shared with any persons or organizations in the community.
- (2) We will be asking no questions about a marriage breakdown or other reasons for the present status of the family. Our concern is with family circumstances today.
- (3) Here are some examples of the kinds of questions most likely to be asked:
 - a) What kind of housing do you have? Is it satisfactory?
 - b) What about income - its source, amount, adequacy?
 - c) What about your job experience since becoming a sole parent and your arrangements for the care of your children while you work?
 - d) Have you found community agencies to be easy to reach and generally helpful, such as day care centres, recreation centres, family court?
 - e) If there is a former spouse, is he or she in touch with you and the children and are there any problems as a result?
 - f) What problems have you had in adjusting to life as a sole parent?
 - g) What are your plans for the future, or your goals or hopes?

These are simply examples of the kinds of questions to expect, and we include them here to help you to reassure parents about the interviews.

How long will an interview last? It is hard to judge, and we will try to give as much or as little time as people want. Our guess would be about 2½ hours.

When a person consents to be interviewed, Miss Thomson will need

- 1) the name, address and telephone.
- 2) the person's preferences as to the time of the interview, with 2 or 3 choices if possible. Please explain that interviews could take place in the evenings and on Saturdays and Sundays as well as weekdays. We are anxious to include employed men and women.

- 3) the person's preference as to the place of the interview. Our own preference is for the person's own home but other arrangements could easily be made.

Your office will know when Miss Thomson will be in your city, and where she could be reached. We hope you will ask for further information or guidance should the need arise. Normally, your report on a person whose consent you have obtained would go to your own office and from there, along with reports from others, to Miss Thomson.

The Canadian Council on Social Development

Le Conseil canadien de Développement social

In reply please quote/Prière de rappeler Appendix 5

We are writing to ask the assistance of your organization in participating in an inquiry which the Canadian Council on Social Development is conducting into the problems experienced by one-parent families. This project is being financed through the Welfare Grants Division of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

In-depth interviews are presently being conducted with sole parents in several communities. Some of these parents are members of organizations such as yours. Others may be potential members.

Another important phase of the inquiry is a survey of one-parent groups. We know that there are differences, as well as similarities, among such organizations. Some limit their membership to women. Some are composed entirely of mothers on social assistance or mothers' allowance. Others have both men and women in their membership and may include people whose financial circumstances vary greatly. Some groups are new while others have been in existence for many years. Some are primarily interested in promoting legislation which will improve the lot of the one-parent family. Others have a wide variety of activities for sole parents and their children.

Since we want to know more about how the picture shapes up nationally, we are seeking information about the goals of one-parent organizations, about their activities, about the composition of their membership and about how the various groups are financed. Another purpose of the survey is to find out whether these organizations are interested in the possibility of forming a national association. We also want to publish a directory of one-parent groups which will be available to organizations such as yours.

We would, therefore, be most grateful if you would fill out the enclosed questionnaire on your organization and return it to us as soon as possible. For your convenience we are enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) Cenovia Addy, Director
Project on One-Parent Families.

- 151 -

55 Parkdale Ottawa K1Y 1E5

Telephone / Téléphone: 613-728-1865
Formerly: The Canadian Welfare Council / Anciennement: Le Conseil canadien du Bien-être
President / Président général: Charles E. Hendry
Chairman, Executive Committee / Président du comité exécutif: Mrs. W. M. Benidickson
Executive Director / Directeur général: Ruth S. S. S.

CANADIAN COUNCIL ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

One-Parent Family Project
Questionnaire for One-Parent Organizations

Name of Organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Name of Current President: _____

Name of Current Corresponding Secretary: _____

Sponsoring Organization if any (Examples: YW, YM, Family Service):

1. Does your organization have a "headquarters" or office?

Yes _____ No _____

2. Do you feel that your organization has an adequate place to meet and carry on business?

Yes _____ No _____

3. When was group organized (year)? _____

Objectives

4. What are the objectives of your organization? _____

5. If your group has a constitution would you please enclose a copy with your reply.

Finances

6. Annual membership fee (amount per member): _____
7. Is the membership fee ever waived? Yes _____ No _____
8. If "yes", under what circumstances? _____

9. Does your organization receive income from any source other than membership fees? Yes _____ No _____
10. If "yes", please specify: _____

11. Do members pay anything "extra" (above the membership fee) to attend social activities or other functions sponsored by the organization? Yes _____ No _____
12. If "yes", give examples: _____

13. Are there extra charges for children's activities? Yes _____ No _____
14. If "yes", give examples: _____

15. If possible, we would appreciate receiving a copy of your organization's budget for the current fiscal year.

Program of Activities

Below is a list of activities in which some one-parent groups engage. Please check the ones which apply to your organization.

16. Social and Recreational

- a. Dances _____
- b. Sports (give examples) _____
- c. Other (give examples) _____

17. Educational Activities

- a. Discussion Groups _____
- b. Speakers (give examples) _____
- c. Educational films _____
- d. Other (give examples) _____

18. Family Activities

(Give examples) _____

19. Special Activities for Children

(Give examples) _____

20. Mutual or "Self-Help" Activities

- a. Information and referral services _____
- b. Clothes bank _____
- c. Co-op store _____
- d. Day care services _____
- e. Baby sitting _____

- f. Psychological or emotional support at times of crisis _____
- g. Legal counselling _____
- h. Other (please specify) _____
21. Social Action
- a. Petitions (give examples) _____
- b. Resolutions (give examples) _____
- c. Briefs (give examples) _____
- d. Demonstrations (give examples) _____
- e. Other (give examples) _____
22. Is your organization listed with a local telephone crisis centre?
- Yes _____ No _____
23. In general, what are the most important ways that sole parents benefit from membership in your organization? _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Membership

24. Size of current membership
- a. number of parents _____
- b. number of non-parents _____
- c. total number of children belonging to members _____
- _____ > Total number _____

25. Composition of Membership

Age distribution

Indicate the number in each category. Check whether information is recorded in organization files _____ or estimated _____.

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
	Number	Number
under 25 years of age	_____	_____
25 - 29	_____	_____
30 - 34	_____	_____
35 - 44	_____	_____
45 - 54	_____	_____
55 and over	_____	_____
TOTAL MEMBERS	_____	_____

26. Marital status of members

Check whether information is recorded in organization files _____ or estimated _____.

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
	Number	Number
Widowed	_____	_____
Divorced	_____	_____
Separated	_____	_____
Deserted	_____	_____
Unmarried Parents	_____	_____
Other (remarried couples or childless, single persons)	_____	_____
TOTAL MEMBERS	_____	_____

27. Type of occupation

(Please indicate the number of members in each category. If a member is not currently employed but has worked in the past, please count according to occupation last followed if known. Examples of the different types of occupation are included in the attached sheet for guidance in completing this question.)

	<u>MEN</u> number	<u>WOMEN</u> number
Professional and Managerial	_____	_____
Clerical	_____	_____
Sales and Service	_____	_____
Production, Construction, Transportation	_____	_____
Student/Trainee	_____	_____
Other (please specify)	_____	_____
Never employed outside of home	_____	_____
Not known	_____	_____
TOTAL MEMBERS	_____	_____

Examples of Different Types of Occupation to be Used in Question 27.

Professional and Managerial

physicians, dentists, nurses, lawyers, engineers, social welfare workers, teachers, librarians, dietitians, laboratory technicians, draughtsmen, government officials, credit managers, sales managers, office managers, people in business on own account

Clerical

secretaries, bookkeepers and cashiers, stenographers, typists, receptionists, office appliance operators

Sales and Service

sales clerks, salesmen, hairdressers, waitresses, nursing assistants, social aides, cooks, homemakers/homehelp, babysitters, telephone operators, ushers, elevator tenders, janitors, service station attendants, firemen, policemen, postmen, armed forces

Production, Construction and Transportation

machinists, mechanics, machine operators, dressmakers, seamstresses, printing workers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, locomotive engineers/firemen/conductors, bus drivers, taxi drivers, truck drivers

28. Main Source of Income

(Please indicate number of members in each category.)

	<u>MEN</u> number	<u>WOMEN</u> number
Employment	_____	_____
Private pension and/or income from spouse's estate	_____	_____
Alimony or support from former spouse	_____	_____
Workmen's compensation, veterans allowance	_____	_____
Social assistance, mothers allowance	_____	_____
Canada Manpower, provincial training grants	_____	_____
Other (please specify)	_____	_____
Not known	_____	_____
TOTAL MEMBERS	_____	_____

Membership Recruitment

29. Does your organization conduct membership recruitment campaigns?

Yes _____ No _____

30. If "yes", what methods do you use? (Examples: periodic ads in newspapers, contacts with social agencies, churches, etc.)

31. How do most new members learn about your organization? _____

32. How does your organization welcome new members? _____

33. In your observation are sole parents more likely to join your organization within the first year after they have become sole parents or later than this? _____

34. Do you have any explanation as to why this is so? _____

35. Is membership extended to any of the following?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. Parents whose children are in the care of a former spouse?	_____	_____
b. Parents whose children are in the care of relatives?	_____	_____
c. Parents whose children are in foster homes or institutions?	_____	_____
d. Parents whose children are all adults? (over 21)	_____	_____
e. Individuals who are married or remarried?	_____	_____
f. Individuals who have never been parents?	_____	_____

36. Are there obstacles or problems in maintaining your organization?

Yes _____ No _____

37. If "yes" check one or more of the problems below which may apply

- a. financial _____
- b. lack of interest on part of members _____
- c. other (please specify) _____

Possibility of National Association of One-Parent Groups

One of the objectives of this study is to determine the degree of interest among one-parent groups in the formation of a national association. In asking the following questions, we are not seeking an official reply from organizations, we just want some indication of the extent to which groups may be interested.

38. Do you think there is a need for a national association of one-parent families?

Yes _____ No _____

39. If your answer is "yes", what do you see as the objectives of such an organization?

40. Do you have any notion of how many paid staff would be needed for a national office?

41. Where should the "headquarters" of such an association be located?

42. Do you have any suggestions about how a national office might be supported?

43. If you see no advantage in a national association would you indicate the basis for your conclusions

44. Do you think there is a need for a provincial association? Why?

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